

INSPECTION REPORT

WINSTANLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Leicester

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120260

Principal: Mrs R Nixon

Reporting inspector: Mark Woodward
11049

Dates of inspection: 14 – 18 January 2002

Inspection number: 222208

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the Schools Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Type of school: Comprehensive

College category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 14 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

College address: Kingsway North
Braunstone Town
Leicestershire

Postcode: LE3 3BD

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P Henton

Date of previous inspection: 13 March 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11049	Mark Woodward	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of college is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The college's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the college led and managed?</p> <p>What should the college do to improve further?</p>
19743	Ann Taylor	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the college care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the college work in partnership with parents?</p>
8216	Geoffrey Binks	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	
19026	Brian Downes	Team inspector	<p>Geography</p> <p>Equal opportunities</p>	
19452	Anthony Pearson	Team inspector	Religious education	
18261	Anthony Hill	Team inspector	<p>Art</p> <p>Special educational needs</p>	
30597	Robina Howells	Team inspector	Mathematics	
12121	John Mallinson	Team inspector	History	
4373	Peter McKenzie	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
4757	David Morris	Team inspector	Music	
20420	Stuart Rawcliffe	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
8682	Martin Trevor	Team inspector	<p>Design and technology</p> <p>Information and communication technology</p>	

18755	Roger Whittaker	Team inspector	Physical education	
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the college	
How good the college is	
What the college does well	
What could be improved	
How the college has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the college	
How well the college is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the college	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The college's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS?	21
HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	26
PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS	27
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Winstanley Community College serves 551 pupils aged 11-14. It is an average-sized comprehensive college, given the age range of the pupils, but smaller than average compared with all secondary colleges. More pupils apply to come to the college than can be admitted. It takes around 20 per cent of the pupils from a deprived area close to the Leicester city centre and the movement of pupils into and out of the college is higher than average. Fifteen per cent of the pupils are eligible for free college meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. Other evidence about the pupils' socio-economic circumstances suggests that the proportion claiming free college meals is lower than expected. Eight per cent of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, none of them at the early stage of language acquisition; the largest minority ethnic group is from Indian heritage. Around 22 per cent of the pupils are on the register for pupils with special educational needs (SEN), which is broadly in line with the national average; five per cent of pupils have Statements of SEN, which is well above the national average. The standards achieved by the pupils when they enter the college are below average.

HOW GOOD THE COLLEGE IS

The principal, governors, senior management team and staff have been successful in improving the college since the last inspection; it provides pupils with a satisfactory standard of education and no longer has serious weaknesses. Standards are rising, as shown by the improved National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 in 2001. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory and the college is aware of further potential for improvement. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

What the college does well

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics, science and art as a result of good teaching.
- The monitoring of pupils' progress has improved and is continuing to improve; this is one of the key elements driving the college's improvement.
- The behaviour of the pupils is now good as a result of the college's effective behaviour management strategies.
- Recent appointments have improved the quality of teaching.
- Good links with the upper school help to ensure that the curriculum transition is managed smoothly.
- The management of science is an example of good practice.
- Financial control is strong.

What could be improved

- The achievement of boys in English is not high enough.
- The provision for pupils with SEN lacks cohesion and does not offer value for money.
- Statutory curriculum requirements are not fully met in information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology; ICT is not used effectively by a number of subjects to enhance pupils' learning.
- The curriculum lacks a clear overall plan; its leadership and management are spread among too many staff.
- The quantity and quality of learning resources are inadequate.
- Senior and middle managers monitor teaching well; they now need to give more emphasis to evaluating how well pupils learn in response to the teaching.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE COLLEGE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The college was last inspected in March 2000, when it had serious weaknesses. It was also inspected by two members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate in June 2001, when it was judged to have made 'reasonable progress'. Since the full inspection in 2000, the school has now made good progress; standards have risen and the college is effectively tackling most of the key issues raised by the

inspection. Most importantly, the quality of teaching has improved and managers and teachers are better focused on taking steps to improve the quality of the college's work.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
End of Key Stage 3 tests	D	D	D	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Results in the National Curriculum tests taken by the pupils at the end of Year 9 in English, mathematics and science are improving; results rose in all three subjects but most particularly in science between 2000 and 2001, having declined between 1998 and 1999. Pupils achieved results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests that were broadly in line with predictions based on their performance on entry to the college in 1998. Comparing their results in all three subjects, pupils made relatively more progress in science and relatively less in English, particularly the boys. Boys achieved higher results than girls compared with the performance of boys and girls nationally in 1999 and 2001, while in 2000, girls achieved higher results than boys; there is evidence to suggest that this was also the case when the same pupils took the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in their primary schools. All the college's test targets were achieved in 2001 except for the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 in English. Teachers' Assessments of the standards achieved by pupils in all subjects at the end of Year 9 rose between 2000 and 2001; there is some inconsistency between the assessments from year to year. Standards seen in lessons and pupils' work were higher than test results indicate in some subjects such as mathematics, indicating an improving trend in performance. The achievement of the pupils is satisfactory overall; it is highest in mathematics, science and art. Boys achieve less well than girls in English. Pupils of all ability levels, including those with SEN and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. The provision for pupils with SEN is inefficient and lacks cohesion but the support offered to the pupils ensures that their progress is satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the college	Good. Most pupils are positive about the college and show commitment to their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good, particularly in classrooms. Most pupils show respect for their teachers and their good behaviour enables learning to take place in an orderly classroom atmosphere.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are good. A minority of pupils are not as considerate to others as they might be.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance levels are in line with national averages.

Since the last inspection the behaviour of the pupils has improved considerably as a result of strategies implemented by managers and staff.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is strongest in mathematics, science and art. Learning is satisfactory overall; it is satisfactory for pupils of all abilities, including those with SEN and those with English as an additional language. Teachers mostly expect pupils to produce work of an appropriate standard but this is an area where further demands could be made. Better procedures for managing pupils in the classroom, introduced since the last inspection, have been successful in improving learning because lessons are more orderly. The teaching of the core skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT is satisfactory, although more contribution could be made by subjects other than English, mathematics and ICT, particularly in the development of ICT and writing skills. Teaching has improved in response to the requirements of the national Key Stage 3 strategies in English and mathematics.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced. A satisfactory range of learning experiences is offered which fulfils statutory requirements except in ICT and design and technology.
Provision for pupils with SEN	Unsatisfactory. While aspects of the provision work well, such as the intensive support for pupils with weaker reading skills, the provision as a whole is too disjointed and therefore inefficient.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress; all are sufficiently fluent in English to take advantage of the curriculum. Not enough attention is paid to checking pupils' level of language acquisition and ensuring that all teachers understand the extent to which these pupils have developed language skills in English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Pupils are expected to behave well and show respect for others; they are also given good opportunities to build positive relationships through curricular and extra-curricular activities. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the college cares for its pupils	Good. The pastoral system supports pupils well, the contribution of heads of year being particularly effective.

Procedures to tackle the unsatisfactory behaviour reported by the last inspection have been successful in improving the atmosphere in classrooms and therefore the pupils' learning opportunities. Assessment procedures have also improved and are now good. The impetus to improve the quality of the college's work has come, to a large extent, from the development of a good system for monitoring pupils' progress. Senior management have responded appropriately to national and local curriculum initiatives. The long-term curriculum strategy is not clear enough nor is the curriculum managed cohesively. Community status is beneficial to the college. It offers opportunities for the pupils to learn about the needs and interests of others and to make contributions to community relationships. A major task for the college is how to ensure that pupils' learning is maintained as they move into the college from primary schools and then onwards to upper schools. A notable strength is the work that is done with the

local upper schools in this area. The college works hard to establish good relationships with parents; communication about what is going on in college is also good. A minority of parents do not support the college's work as strongly as they might. More pupils apply to join the college than it can take and parents recognise that the college is improving.

HOW WELL THE COLLEGE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the principal and other key staff	Satisfactory. The college is well managed. Effective action has been taken since the last inspection to improve the college and it now has good procedures in place to help it improve further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors work hard for the college and have had a positive impact on its development. They are well led by an active and energetic chairperson.
The college's evaluation of its performance	Good. Senior and most middle managers have a good understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses; this has been one of the key elements in helping the college to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Financial planning is closely linked to development planning. Some resources are not used efficiently, particularly the staff supporting pupils with SEN.

The principal, senior managers and staff have worked well in partnership with the local education authority to tackle the issues raised by the last inspection. Senior and middle managers appropriately have the improvement of the educational provision in all subjects as one of their key roles; more emphasis should be given to maximising pupils' learning. The leadership and management of science are very good. The college has sufficient staff and adequate accommodation; however, the provision of learning resources is unsatisfactory. At the time of the last inspection the college was suffering a number of staffing difficulties. These have been resolved and the quality of the appointments made has been high. Financial control is a strength of the college and the principles of best value are mostly applied well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like the college • Pupils make good progress • The college's improvement since the last inspection • The college expects pupils to work hard and achieve well • Staff are approachable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The more consistent setting of homework

Seventeen per cent of the inspection questionnaires were returned and 21 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting. The views of these parents are therefore not necessarily representative of those held by all the parents. Inspectors agree with parents that the pupils enjoy college, that the college has improved since the last inspection, that staff are approachable and that the amount of homework set each day is not consistent. Inspectors judge that teachers expect pupils to work at a satisfactory rate and that pupils' progress is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The college's results and pupils' achievements

1. Since the last inspection, the achievement of the pupils has risen. The main results of action taken by the college in response to the criticisms of the last inspection are: a rise in the quality of teaching in terms of both the performance of full-time staff and a reduction in the use of temporary staff; improved self-evaluation procedures; better tracking of pupils' progress and improved pupil behaviour. Parents are pleased with the improvement of the college over the past two years.
2. Pupils achieved results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests that were broadly in line with predictions based on their performance on entry to the college in 1998. They made more progress in science and less in English, particularly the boys, relative to those predictions. All the college's test targets were achieved in 2001 except for the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 in English. The targets for 2002 are appropriately challenging.
3. The standards achieved by the pupils when they enter the college are below average. Standards are rising as shown by the results of the current Year 7 pupils in the National Curriculum tests that they take at the end of Year 6.
4. Standards seen in lessons and pupils' work, compared with national standards, are: average in mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, art and physical education; and below average in English, history, geography, music and religious education.
5. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests, pupils gained results in English and mathematics that were below national averages and below average for pupils in similar schools (based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free college meals); they gained results in science that were in line with the national average and the average for similar schools. In 2000, the results were lower; they were well below national averages in English and science and below the national average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, the results were well below average in all three subjects. Results in all three subjects in 1998 were broadly in line with national averages, after which they fell sharply. Not enough evidence is available about the relative academic strengths of the pupils around this time to make secure comparisons with the results currently being achieved; however, staffing problems in all three subjects did make a contribution to the decline in results after 1998. The trend in the college's results since 1997 is below the national trend.
6. Over the past three years, boys' and girls' National Curriculum test results in English, mathematics and science have been, on average, similarly below the results of boys and girls nationally. However, in 1999 and 2001 boys achieved relatively higher results than girls while in 2000, girls achieved relatively higher results than boys. Evidence suggests that this reflects the relative standards achieved by the pupils on entry to the college.
7. Test results in English over the past three years have been worse than those in mathematics and science. The results in science rose substantially in 2001, reflecting the rise in the quality of provision in that subject. An indication of the effectiveness of science teaching is the proportion of pupils gaining Level 7 in the National Curriculum test results in 2001, a much higher proportion than in English or mathematics.
8. Teachers' Assessments of the standards achieved by pupils in all subjects at the end of Year 9 rose between 2000 and 2001. In 2001 they were: above the national average in art and modern foreign languages; in line with the national average in design and technology, history, information and communication technology and physical education; and below the national average in geography and music. There is some inconsistency between the assessments from year to year and between the assessments of boys' and girls' performance; however, the accuracy of the

college's assessments is improving. Standards seen in lessons and pupils' work were higher than test results or Teacher Assessments indicate in some subjects such as mathematics, indicating an improving trend in performance.

9. The achievement of the pupils is satisfactory overall; pupils achieve best in mathematics, science and art. Boys achieve less well than girls in English. All pupils, including those with SEN and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress.
10. The achievement of the pupils is: good in mathematics, science, art and physical education; and satisfactory in English, design and technology, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, history, geography, music and religious education.
11. Pupils' progress is restricted by limited opportunities to develop thinking skills and to take responsibility for their own learning. They do not speak at length with ease, nor do they confidently sustain arguments using relevant evidence. This is the result of teachers providing information for the pupils too readily. Most pupils, therefore, do not have the ability and self-assurance to take issue with others' opinions. Pupils' independent research skills are under-developed partly due to their limited access to ICT facilities.
12. The progress of pupils with SEN is satisfactory overall. Where pupils with SEN are withdrawn for a short course of intensive literacy they make very good and, on occasion, excellent progress with their reading. On one course, gains of three years' reading age over the six-week course have been recorded. Gains in spelling age are not so dramatic, but are nonetheless good. The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) is reviewing a different spelling course to bring spelling gains more into line with those for reading. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs, and pupils who are given set hours of additional specialist teaching or learning support assistant time, make generally good and often very good progress against their statement and Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets. Their academic progress is at least in line with other pupils. They make at least good progress where they are withdrawn as a separate group for a lesson; however, this can entail a group of two or three pupils being given the support of one specialist teacher and one learning support assistant, outside the mainstream lesson; this is inefficient. Overall, the use of support assistants and teaching staff is not well enough targeted at meeting the learning needs of all the pupils with SEN.
13. Pupils who are on the SEN register but not 'statemented' make satisfactory progress in the majority of subjects. They make good progress in art, physical education and ICT. The satisfactory progress is due to the sound knowledge that teachers have of SEN pupils, provided through IEPs, and the sensitive attention they give to them. Many teachers adapt their teaching or provide simplified work for pupils, where needed.
14. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. None of the pupils has restricted access to learning opportunities because of language limitations; however, teachers and managers are not sufficiently aware of the levels of English language skills of the pupils to be able to match work most effectively to their needs.
15. Higher ability pupils make satisfactory progress. Most subjects have developed some teaching materials to stretch these pupils but this is at a relatively early stage of development. In science, more able pupils make good progress because teachers have developed a range of strategies to extend their learning.
16. Pupils' reading skills are average and better developed than their writing skills by the age of 14. The college has continued the well-established practice of having a weekly silent reading session for all pupils in tutor time each Friday morning; this works best in Years 7 and 8 and less well in some Year 9 groups. A particular benefit is that it encourages the regular borrowing of fiction from the college library by most pupils in Years 7 and 8. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average. They are able to express themselves clearly but the majority use a narrow range of vocabulary; for example, in a citizenship lesson in Year 9, none of the pupils was able to explain the meaning of the words 'inundated' or 'extortion'. Reading is encouraged by the daily availability

of the library to pupils at breaks and lunchtimes and until 4.30 p.m. each day after college. The 'Study Club', based in the library and set up as part of the college's Literacy Action Plan, was operating successfully during the inspection in providing a homework and reading club after normal hours.

17. Pupils' numeracy skills are average. They are able to use number successfully to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in all subjects. In science and geography, for example, pupils routinely record and use data to produce various types of graphs and they interpret data and graphs from various sources. Graph work in science is taught using good quality "basic skills" texts. A method used to re-arrange equations in science has been adopted by the mathematics department as an alternative method to that traditionally used. In ICT, there was much use of spreadsheets in Year 9 and this work was done with style. There is good development of the shape and skills aspects of numeracy in art. Pupils composed designs based on geometric patterns in connection with their study of abstract art. In lessons related to shading and blending they follow a design brief that required them to measure accurately and in lessons on perspective they encounter ratio and proportion. Pupils painting Islamic tile patterns showed that they understood the concepts of symmetry.
18. The core provision of ICT is satisfactory and results in pupils developing skills that are average in relation to national standards and improving. New facilities are about to extend the opportunities for pupils to develop their use of ICT in other subjects, but at present this element of curricular provision is unsatisfactory, which is reflected in pupils' overall understanding of how to use ICT to enhance their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

19. Pupils have good attitudes to the college and their overall quality of behaviour is good. These positive attributes enable pupils to take advantage of the curriculum and other opportunities on offer to them. This is an important improvement since the previous inspection, when behaviour was unsatisfactory and a key weakness for the college to rectify.
20. Pupils enjoy coming to college and most enjoy their lessons. A good number take advantage of the clubs at lunchtime and the youth club is a popular venue for older pupils. They use the library and computers well without direct supervision, displaying mature attitudes and a willingness to learn for themselves.
21. Generally, pupils come into classrooms expecting to work and they settle down quickly, with good levels of concentration. These positive attributes were clearly shown in a very good personal, social and health education lesson about anger management. In this fast moving lesson, the teacher's effective way of involving pupils in recapping the previous lesson meant that pupils were interested, forthcoming and willing to learn more. They were keen to offer their own stories about being angry – for instance when watching a football match. Through writing down their own experiences and discussing them in groups, they began to realise the difference between destructive and positive anger and completed a good amount of work by the end.
22. The overall quality of behaviour is good. In some subject areas, such as science, mathematics and art, it is often very good and sometimes excellent. Behaviour has improved because staff are now more familiar with the assertive discipline policy and it is being used well. The overall quality of lessons has also improved: they are more varied and so pupils are more interested in what they are doing; as a result, they are less likely to misbehave. Pupils are polite and friendly individuals, willing to help and happy to talk about their work to visitors.
23. The quality of behaviour in the public places of the college is sometimes not as good. Where staff take responsibility for overseeing corridor behaviour, it is satisfactory. In some areas of the college, however, pupils show a lack of respect for each other, for example by pushing and shoving. Formal and informal discussions took place with pupils from all years about aspects of college life. Year 9 pupils feel that the amount of bullying has reduced and they recognise how behaviour in the college has improved. Pupils from Years 8 and 9 spoke of most cases of bullying being dealt with well but of some 'slipping through the net'. Year 8 felt that not all the methods of

overcoming bullying that the college uses work effectively. Year 7 pupils were generally happy about nearly all aspects of college life.

24. There have been 27 fixed-term and three permanent exclusions over the last academic year. Nearly all of these involved boys, whose behaviour tends to be more challenging than that of the girls. The college uses exclusions appropriately in response to violence and verbal abuse and staff appropriately take a firm line and are not prepared to lower their values. Investment in anger management support has seen the numbers of pupils involved in fixed-term exclusions decrease. The incidence of exclusion is broadly average compared with schools nationally and similar to the level at the time of the last inspection.
25. Relationships in the college are good and pupils get on well with each other and with staff. Being a relatively small college, friendships often cross year groups and the atmosphere in college is positive. Pupils play an important role in college life and show themselves to be capable of a greater degree of responsibility than they are currently given. Through year group councils, they are currently deciding the best way to spend money given to them by the Friends of Winstanley. Suggestions so far from Year 7, such as employing extra staff in the canteen, have led to pupil councillors learning important lessons about salaries and budgetary constraints. Through their own suggestion, Year 9 pupils have been successful in obtaining black organisers to match their black jumpers, a sign of their status as the most senior pupils. A group of pupils are currently working with an 'artist in residence', on a sculpture for a local park. This came about through pupils winning the prize in a competition held by the local council.
26. Pupils' attendance rate is satisfactory and, at 91 per cent, is broadly in line with the national average for secondary schools. Figures have fallen when compared to the attendance rate at the time of the previous inspection. However, the college has taken appropriate steps to arrest this decline, and the attendance for last term was an encouraging 92.2 per cent. Unauthorised absence has risen to above the national average as tutors are starting to take a firmer line on what they will accept as a reason for absence. While the overall attendance of year groups is above 90 per cent, it does dip below in certain tutor groups. This is due to a combination of factors, including a small number of pupils with significant attendance problems involving outside agencies and court action, a growing number of parents taking two weeks' holidays during term time, which, if pupils are subsequently absent with illness as well, has a more significant effect, and a small number of students who have moved away but still remain on the college's role for some time. There are also some families who place little emphasis on their children's regular attendance and are willing to condone frequent days off college.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

27. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and this results in satisfactory learning. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, ICT and art. It is satisfactory in all other subjects.
28. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. At that time, although teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall, 13 per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory. In this inspection only four per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory. The proportion of good and very good teaching was also higher. Of the 111 lessons seen, 56 per cent were good or better and 16 per cent were very good or excellent.
29. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and they use it to plan lessons effectively; for example, the art teachers are skilful artists themselves, which enables them to demonstrate techniques well; this also motivates the pupils to produce good quality work.
30. A major improvement since the last inspection has been the behaviour of pupils in the classroom. Teachers and managers have achieved this through the adoption, and consistent implementation, of a whole-college strategy to promote good behaviour. Behaviour in class is better than behaviour

around the college, which indicates the impact of the strategy when pupils are under direct supervision.

31. At the time of the last inspection the college was suffering from a staffing crisis, which adversely affected the quality of educational provision. This issue has been resolved well. As parents indicated during the pre-inspection meeting, good appointments have been made in a number of subjects.
32. The quality of learning is satisfactory for all pupils including those with SEN and English as an additional language. Most teachers expect pupils to produce work of a standard appropriate to their abilities, but this is an aspect of teaching that could be improved further. Teachers have a tendency to restrict pupils' opportunities to think and to discover for themselves by providing too much information too quickly. This may be a result of teachers wanting to exercise more control in the classroom in response to the unsatisfactory behaviour that was evident during the last inspection. It does, however, limit the opportunities for pupils to be stretched by the work that is set and to take responsibility for their own learning. In history, for example, pupils are not given opportunities to speak at length or to argue and defend opinions. Little evaluation of the quality of source materials takes place and so pupils do not develop the confidence to challenge the views of others. This also has a detrimental impact on the quality of their extended writing.
33. The teaching of science, geography and modern foreign languages at the time of the last inspection was not challenging more able pupils to produce work of a high enough standard. This has been improved significantly in science and is now satisfactory in modern languages and geography.
34. Pupils' learning is impeded by the limited access to ICT in subjects other than ICT itself. Sometimes pupils have the opportunity to research topics by using computers in the library, but this is not something regularly available to all pupils. A new ICT facility is about to become available; this will enable provision to be improved.
35. Senior and middle managers have developed regular monitoring of teaching and this has been beneficial in improving practice throughout the college. Good routines have developed, such as the sharing of lesson objectives with pupils. Not enough emphasis is given, in this monitoring and evaluation process, to analysing how well pupils learn in response to the teaching.
36. The teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT is satisfactory. Most of this teaching and learning takes place in English, mathematics and ICT lessons; other subjects do not make enough contribution to the development of pupils' skills, particularly in ICT and writing.
37. Very good links have been formed with the upper school that most of the pupils attend after leaving Winstanley. This has resulted in partnerships between departments that help to ensure that pupils' learning is not disrupted by the change of colleges. In science, for example, pupils start the GCSE course before they leave in Year 9.
38. Homework practices were criticised in the last inspection and by inspectors when they visited the college in the summer of 2001. Subjects have improved their work in this area, so that homework is used more effectively to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. Pupils, however, still report that some teachers do not adhere to the homework timetable.
39. The teaching of pupils with SEN is good overall. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the pupils they teach and are confident in preparing and managing the personal and academic support that they give. The teaching of small withdrawal groups for intensive literacy is very effective and a strength of the provision. Personal and social skills are interwoven with sound educational practice to ensure that pupils work hard on the literacy courses and make very good progress. Class teachers who are given timetabled time to support non-statemented pupils do some useful work but their input is not planned in a strategic way and therefore does not give value for money.

40. Pupils with SEN learn at a satisfactory rate in mainstream lessons. Teachers are aware of their needs and generally work hard to ensure that they understand the lesson aims and are able to tackle the prepared lesson material. This enables the pupils to concentrate on the set tasks and make progress at a similar rate to others in the class. On occasion, the level of difficulty confronting a teacher in a class in which there are several SEN pupils leads to a situation where support is needed but unavailable because there is little support allocated to non-statemented SEN pupils. Statemented pupils benefit from the individual support they receive from support staff and are able to learn well in lessons where they are supported. Gains in learning are then transferred to lessons where they are not directly supported.

41. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory gains in learning. However, teachers do not have a full enough knowledge of pupils' level of understanding in English. This is an unsatisfactory situation because without that knowledge they are unable to make any adjustments to their teaching methods or to their learning resources to support individual pupils.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

42. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils are taught for 25 hours per week, which is broadly average for the age range of the pupils, and the time given to each subject is sufficient to cover the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. At the time of the last inspection, the time given to a number of subjects was too low; this issue has now been resolved.

43. Although the curriculum is satisfactory, it is developing largely in response to pressure from national and local initiatives. A set of principles is needed to guide the overall development of the curriculum so that it meets the learning needs of the pupils and responds to statutory and local requirements. The unsatisfactory provision for pupils with SEN is a good example of how operational matters are driving the nature of the provision rather than a clear strategy of how best to organise the curriculum to help the pupils learn. The leadership and management of the curriculum are unsatisfactory.

44. The mathematics department is revising schemes of work to meet the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy, and the English department has revised schemes of work for all years; they now meet the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy.

45. Excellent use is made of an artist in residence; the artist is working with pupils to produce a sculpture for a park near to the college. French is studied by all pupils but the lack of a second foreign language is a weakness.

46. The quality of the ICT curriculum in the specialist lessons is good; across the other subjects, except science, it is poor. In most subjects, ICT is not used effectively as a learning tool and therefore they do not meet statutory requirements. This is disadvantageous to the pupils because it does not prepare them well enough for using ICT as a key tool whatever their future direction. The new computer facilities being developed in the college provide an opportunity for this situation to be improved. The lack of the necessary resources to manipulate resistant materials, together with insufficient ICT to cover aspects such as systems and control, means that the curriculum in design and technology is poor; it does not meet statutory requirements. A realistic attempt to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum has been made in these disadvantageous circumstances.

47. The college has made good progress in developing a pilot course in citizenship to teach across all years. Planning the course to start a full year early was difficult because of the lack of exemplar materials upon which to build a programme. Despite this the teacher responsible has planned and is teaching an ambitious and well-illustrated curriculum in Years 8 and 9 that includes important challenging topics such as child labour rights, slavery, the diversity of British society, and asylum rights. The topics taught are evaluated and adjusted as the new course proceeds. At the moment the Year 7 course follows a commercially produced course book on aspects of citizens' responsibilities, taught through a fictional story.

48. In the two citizenship lessons seen, purposeful, thoughtful teaching helped pupils to develop an understanding of discrimination and prejudice within the broad theme of human rights. The lessons were valuable also in the reinforcement of important literacy and oracy skills. Reading, speaking and writing were important elements of the work covered. The teacher has planned units of work and individual lessons well by selecting topics of concern to young people and by using very topical examples illustrated from newspaper and television sources.
49. The curriculum for personal, health and social education is being re-written to meet guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority; the new scheme is being planned appropriately to involve pupils more actively in their learning. The school is considering how to integrate personal, health and social education and citizenship in September 2002. Further planning needs to occur in this area to ensure that curriculum time is well used and curriculum balance is maintained.
50. An alternative curriculum is available for a small number of students in Year 9 called "You Choose – Curriculum 2000" for pupils at risk of becoming disaffected with school. The school feels that it has successfully helped to prevent some exclusions and therefore given those pupils a chance of gaining qualifications.
51. Pupils help in the running of the college through membership of the college council, and by helping in reception duty, playground duty, and support in the library and computer room. The college has a programme of visiting groups such as the "Loudmouth Theatre" and "Project Charlie". There are visits planned for each year to venues such as the "Good Food Show" for Year 9, the science museum for Year 8 and Stonehurst farm for Year 7. There are also residential trips to the Isle of Wight. As Winstanley is a community college, a wide range of activities are scheduled each evening of the week for both adults and young people.
52. The college is still failing to meet the requirement of a daily act of collective worship though the provision has increased from one to two assemblies each week since the last inspection.
53. Links with the receiving upper school are excellent. Staff at all levels within the family of high schools and upper schools meet frequently to ensure a common curriculum that runs from age 11 to age 16. Principals and senior management personnel meet six times a year. Upper school staff from all departments visit Winstanley, and in the summer term there are joint GCSE projects within English, design technology and music, while mathematics teachers start the new syllabus. Smooth pastoral transfer is achieved by meetings between the head of Year 9 and the heads of the upper schools' Year 10. The latter staff, along with those responsible for SEN in the upper schools, attend the parents' evening for Year 9. All pupils are interviewed before they leave and all spend three days in the upper school of their choice.
54. The provision for careers is good. The appropriate liaison teachers from the upper schools and high schools form a steering group that organises the activities through which staff are made aware of what is taught in the different institutions. Pupils are fully briefed about choices for GCSE and know what to expect when they move. The implications for subsequent careers are fully covered when pupils make their option choices. Good coverage of careers issues is given by the personal and social education programme.
55. Pastoral links with the feeder primary schools are very good; curricular links are only satisfactory, being less effective than before partly in response to the pressure in primary schools to spend more time on developing literacy and numeracy. However, much is done to ease transition: the principals meet once a month; the National Curriculum test results from the end of Year 6 are passed on in good time; the head of Year 7 visits all primary schools and talks to all pupils, not solely those likely to join Winstanley; SEN staff interview every pupil on the register; and all pupils visit Winstanley in November, followed by a whole day in July.
56. Overall the provision for pupils with SEN is unsatisfactory and is in need of review in the light of the revised Code of Practice. The provision for statemented pupils is good.

57. The local authority allocates the necessary teaching and support hours, based on the requirements specified in statements, and the college employs support staff appropriately. The local authority, on the basis of an annual, renewable contract, pays for support teachers. Learning support assistants are employed on a monthly ancillary contract. Allocated hours are constantly changing and therefore the SENCO cannot build and develop a team and cannot allocate her team to subject departments, a practice that enables support staff to build their expertise and develop as valued, experienced and well-qualified department members. The arrangements also limit the freedom of the college to meet the learning needs of all the pupils with SEN. Many learning support assistants have training, experience and qualifications that are valuable in work with SEN pupils and these cannot easily be capitalised on to develop the work of the department.
58. Teachers are also timetabled to provide support for pupils with SEN. This occurs in a more or less arbitrary way because it depends upon when they have not been allocated other teaching commitments rather than whether pupils with SEN need their support.
59. The provision of intensive literacy programmes for selected pupils is a strength. The 'Oasis' lunchtime club, run by two learning support assistants, is very successful in providing support for younger, more vulnerable pupils. It offers personal and social support for pupils and enhances their self-esteem and motivation to learn.
60. An 'Active Reading' programme has been introduced as part of the literacy action plan. As yet this has made little impact. Reading aloud is encouraged regularly in English, French, and in citizenship lessons but rarely in other subjects. For example, in geography and history lessons pupils are not usually asked to read aloud even when opportunities arise. A two-hour 'twilight' training session is not the most productive time to launch such an important initiative. The most important areas of the national strategy implementation planned for introduction in 2002 are the organisation of progress units to support Year 7 pupils with low literacy skills and the launch of a cross-curricular programme on 'Listening Skills'.
61. Some ongoing literacy initiatives, such as the highlighting of new key vocabulary, particularly those words specific to subjects, are in place in some areas. English, design and technology, geography, history, mathematics and science teachers display key words prominently. The college intends to complete the coverage of all subject areas by March of this year. At the moment there are few signs of any concerted effort to encourage and develop skills in writing across the college. Guidance to other subject teachers on providing opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes within lessons would also be beneficial.
62. The contribution of subjects other than mathematics to the development of pupils' numeracy skills is not systematic, although the head of the mathematics department has a plan in place to conduct an audit. The provision for the teaching of numeracy is satisfactory; it is covered effectively in mathematics where teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy.
63. The college provides a good range of extra-curricular activities in which large numbers of pupils participate. The range of activities offered by the college not only enriches the curriculum, but also extends the range of opportunities for students to achieve. Most subjects offer pupils the opportunity to develop their course work by attending extra lunchtime and after college sessions and a number of college-based clubs support pupils' learning and personal development. The physical education department runs after hours clubs in badminton, basketball, netball, boys' and girls' football, boys' and girls' rugby and swimming. In the summer athletics and cricket are available. Open access clubs are used as both leisure and recreation but also to identify pupils with talents, which enable them to represent the college in most major team games as well as some individual activities. The college produces teams and individuals who are competitive in matches and tournaments against other colleges. A few pupils gain recognition by selection for local and area teams. Musical activities include a variety of choir and small ensemble opportunities. Art, dance and computer clubs are run at lunch times and the library is also open for use. After hours, the study centre is open for pupils to use. The college has developed an

activity programme, which runs for one day in the summer term. Pupils can opt from a range of activities which take place both on site and further afield. Pupils are also offered further opportunities to experience residential visits both at home and abroad.

64. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, overall.
65. The college's contribution to pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. It was reported as unsatisfactory at the last inspection and has improved, particularly in the provision for religious education. A thoughtful, reflective atmosphere is created in assemblies and pupils have opportunities to reflect on their lives and on the lives of other people. There is a spiritual element in subjects such as art, where pupils celebrate the work of great artists, and in English, where pupils study aspects of homelessness. There is still no overall policy for the college to cover spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this means that coverage is inconsistent. Planning for pupils' spiritual development is not strong across all subjects and not all areas of the curriculum make a sufficient contribution.
66. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. A strong moral dimension is found in most lessons, where teachers emphasise a code of good behaviour and consideration for others. This is sometimes not so consistent around the college at breaks and lunchtimes. There are good procedures in place for rewarding good work and behaviour. The adults in the college provide good role models. Pupils know right from wrong and the college is generally an orderly community.
67. There is good provision for pupils' social development. Opportunities are taken in the majority of lessons for developing social skills such as working together, sharing and taking turns. There is a satisfactory range of after college activities, which adds to the social development of pupils. The college council enables pupils to raise issues of concern and interest to them. Pupils have opportunities to take responsibility such as acting as receptionists to visitors during the day, hosting senior citizens at the Christmas party and helping visitors at parents' evenings and open days. Pupils in Years 7 and 9 have a residential trip each year, while pupils in Year 8 have the opportunity to go on a series of day visits including a trip to Boulogne. These are beneficial in extending pupils' cultural experiences.
68. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. In religious education, pupils study world religions and the work in art covers a range of visual art styles from across the world. Subjects such as English, geography and history make a strong contribution to pupils' cultural development, while good multicultural resources are available in the library. Pupils visit art galleries and theatres, which adds considerably to their cultural experiences. The element of preparation for life in a highly diverse multicultural society is not yet sufficiently well developed. The college is aware of this and preparations are in hand for greater inclusion in personal, social and health education lessons. It is also envisaged that lessons in citizenship will play a strong role in this development.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

69. The college has a strong pastoral system, effectively managed by heads of year, who carefully monitor and oversee pupils in their care. Heads of year play a critical role in supporting their tutor teams. They have a good knowledge of individual pupils in their year groups. Using 'expectation sheets' produced four times a year, they gain a valuable overview of how well pupils are doing. This enables heads of year to recognise pupils' achievements and to identify any causes for concern, for example connected to behaviour, homework, attendance or effort. Staff spend a good deal of their time in counselling and supporting pupils where there are problems. As a result, the monitoring of pupils' personal development is good.
70. Systems for encouraging pupils to behave well and for monitoring behaviour if it shows any signs of deteriorating are good; the college has made good progress in improving this aspect of its work. This is in response to a key issue from the previous inspection, to ensure greater consistency when managing behaviour. As a direct consequence, the quality of pupils' behaviour has

improved. The assertive discipline policy is firmly part of college life and is known and understood by pupils and used well by nearly all staff.

71. A detailed behaviour management system, including a register of pupils behaving inappropriately, is effective in enabling staff to keep a close check on those causing concern. Staff make time to talk to pupils about their behaviour, while encouraging them to change the way they react. The option of pupils moving both up and down the register, through a two-weekly review process, means that successes are rewarded and extra support provided, where necessary.
72. Procedures to help eliminate such behaviour are appropriate; the college takes any incidents of bullying seriously and all cases are recorded and followed up. Pupils indicate that, while most incidents are dealt with well, there are some cases which 'slip through the net'. They feel that some of the strategies the college employs to overcome bullying do not always work effectively.
73. Health and safety procedures have improved since the previous inspection and they are now satisfactory. The previous inspection highlighted the absence of risk assessments and problems in the art and design, physical education and science departments as key weaknesses to remedy. The college has worked hard to overcome these; however, there are still problems within the art and design and technology departments, the science laboratory and corridor floor. These are explained more fully in the subject paragraphs.
74. Staff have now been trained in a risk control procedure following county guidance. Health and safety is a much higher priority area than before, with a good level of staff and governor involvement. However, the college's own risk assessments do not categorise all areas of risk within the college; for example, they have not looked at the risks associated with the current poor state of some of the floors. They do not assess the degree of risk involved in the environment or activity nor are they detailing measures the college is actually taking to minimise them. In addition, the health and safety policy is much out-of-date and does not accurately reflect current practice within the college.
75. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and the named person is appropriately trained and experienced. The college has improved the way it familiarises new staff with procedures to ensure that all know what to do if there is a concern. A weakness is that no one else is trained to named person status, to deputise if the principal is not available.
76. Another recent improvement is evident in the way the college is now working to encourage regular attendance and monitor more closely those pupils who are absent. New procedures introduced at the start of the academic year are starting to make a difference and the overall quality of procedures is satisfactory. There are better working relationships between staff and the educational welfare officer and a more shared approach to improving pupils' attendance. It is encouraging that the college reports a two per cent increase in its attendance figure compared with the same period last year.
77. The college is positive in its willingness to devise alternative ways of helping pupils cope better with the challenges and demands of life. The youth club on site runs well-attended lunchtime sessions, offering a good number of different activities such as table tennis, cards and pool. The fact that pupils are kept busy is helping to ensure that the quality of behaviour around the college remains generally positive at lunchtimes. The Oasis club meets regularly and, with activities such as board games and craft activities, provides another venue for certain invited pupils who value the secure and friendly environment.
78. One of the benefits of the community provision is the productive relationship existing between college and youth service. They are trying out a new 'U-Choose' programme run by the youth tutor for selected Year 9 pupils who are finding it very difficult to fit in with the demands and rigours of the curriculum and college life. This is another good example of the college working effectively with partners to identify and meet pupils' different social and learning needs.

79. The college includes more than 40 pupils for whom English is not their first language. All speak English with reasonable fluency and are able to take advantage of the curriculum but they are at various stages of competence with reading and writing. The college records only their first language spoken and their tutor group; it does not have a record of their stage of competence in the acquisition of English. This information would be helpful to all teachers and to pupils, some of whom may still need additional support. No one has responsibility for the oversight and welfare of these pupils as a group or as individuals; this is unsatisfactory.
80. Pupils with SEN are well cared for and very good records are kept of the progress of pupils with statements. IEPs are reviewed each half term and new targets set, in consultation with the pupil. The department provides a baseline of attainment through information from feeder primary schools and from basic skills tests given to pupils on entry. Many teachers appropriately adapt teaching materials and programmes to enable the SEN pupils to gain full benefit from lessons. Annual reviews are held, as required, and some 95 per cent of parents attend them. The careers guidance service does not attend the transition reviews, which is a weakness of the provision. Reports from subject departments, requested for the annual review meeting, are unsatisfactory. They tend to be bland statements that do not record progress against IEP targets and do not give the information that parents should have to inform them of the progress of their children within the special provisions made by the college.
81. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress are now good. They have improved since the last inspection. An effective, central, comprehensive 'tracking' system is now in operation across the three year groups. This draws upon reliable information from the primary schools of pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests and assessments at the age of eleven. The college adds its own reading, spelling and numeracy data from internal tests and predicts pupils' potential performance by using a well-established commercial system. This gives all subject teachers, tutors, and those concerned with learning and pastoral support a clear picture of pupils' prior attainment and it allows the recording of achievement and the setting of targets as pupils progress through the school.
82. Within the whole college system, responsibility is devolved to heads of department to operate a subject assessment policy. This is based mainly on the process of assessment in relation to National Curriculum levels within the separate subject attainment targets. In most subjects teachers make thorough regular assessments of pupils' work to maintain a record through regular marking of work, setting tests and grading attainment according to national standards. There are some differences of practice, however, across the range of subjects. Assessment procedures are good, for example, in art, modern languages, geography and science. They are satisfactory and improving in English but are poor in religious education. As a result, older pupils in Year 9 were confident that in certain subjects they knew which level they had reached, but not in all. In the small group interviewed most knew their national levels for design and technology, English, French, history, mathematics, physical education and science. There is a need for greater standardisation of practice.

HOW WELL DOES THE COLLEGE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS?

83. The college is over subscribed, well regarded by parents and carers and a popular choice in the area, with several families travelling some distance to attend. There are effective relationships between staff and parents, who are sent a good amount of information about their children and general college life. The college's work to involve parents more has improved since the previous inspection.
84. Seventeen per cent of the inspection questionnaires were returned (similar to the rate of return for the last inspection) and 21 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting. The views of these parents are therefore not necessarily representative of those held by all the parents. Parents are

much more positive about most aspects of college life than they were when the college was last inspected. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were generally very supportive of the college.

85. Inspectors agree with parents that: the pupils enjoy college, the college has improved since the last inspection, staff are approachable and the amount of homework set each day is not consistent. Inspectors judge that teachers expect pupils to work at a satisfactory rate and that pupils' progress is satisfactory.
86. The college spends time in developing effective links with parents. They find that a phone call is often much more effective than a formal letter, so prefer to use this method of contact, where possible. Newsletters from the college are friendly and interesting and give parents and carers a good insight into college life. College practice of sending out 'expectation letters' four times a year is a particular strength of this relationship. These provide parents with an overview of their children's attendance, lateness, numbers of yellow slips (for good work) and green (where there are concerns) and feedback from subjects. Certificates such as Principal's Classwork and Homework Awards and a Friends of Winstanley award are linked to this system.
87. Another effective way the college is working with parents is shown in the good attendance at parents' evenings. Tutors are given a minimum target of 75 per cent parental attendance to aim for. They then follow up with telephone calls and letters if numbers fall below this, especially for those parents who are rarely seen.
88. Pupils' annual reports are improving and, of the two year groups seen, those written last term were of a better standard, having a sharper focus on progress rather than describing pupils' attitudes to their work. This was a criticism made during the previous inspection. The quality of reports is satisfactory, with some inconsistencies between subjects. Most, but not all, subjects tell parents the National Curriculum level their child is working at, and most targets for improvement are clear - such as 'improve your grasp of times tables' or 'answer in full sentences'.
89. Pupils' organisers are a useful reference point for both pupils and their parents, as they contain a range of different information such as the college policy on bullying. Parents, pupils and staff use them much more than the old 'homework diary' system described in the previous inspection and they are now a valuable link between home and college.
90. Parents have a satisfactory level of involvement in college life. Some parents, such as the Friends of Winstanley, give the school a very high level of support; however, a minority of parents do not support the school's efforts to help their children to achieve academic success and to develop their personal skills.
91. The Friends of Winstanley are a group of parents and staff which has formed since the previous inspection and is working hard to raise money for the college. Their regularly held discos are very popular with pupils. They have recently given a sum of money to be spent by each year group council, and they pay for the Friends of Winstanley attendance awards, as well as helping to finance the cost of pupils' organisers and college trips. Their efforts are having a beneficial effect on the quality of college life pupils are experiencing.

HOW WELL IS THE COLLEGE LED AND MANAGED?

92. The college was last inspected in March 2000, when it had serious weaknesses. It was subsequently inspected by two members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate in June 2001, when it was judged to have made 'reasonable progress'. Since the full inspection of 2000 it has made good progress overall. In science and ICT progress has been good while in all other subjects it has been satisfactory. Progress is greater across the whole college than in most subjects because the impact of the changes being made is not yet fully reflected in National Curriculum test results or statutory Teacher Assessments.
93. Since the last inspection, standards have risen and are continuing to rise. The college is effectively tackling the key issues raised by the inspection: standards are rising in English, while

in history, geography and music satisfactory progress is being made in improving provision; higher ability pupils are given more challenging work in science and modern foreign languages, although this remains a weakness in geography; expectations of the pupils' behaviour are much higher; expectations of the quality of pupils' work have improved but more improvement is necessary; management is better focused on improving the quality of the college's work; the overall quality of teaching staff is higher; ICT provision is improving but there remain shortfalls in some subjects; sufficient curricular time is given to religious education; some health and safety issues have been resolved but others remain; and there is still no daily act of collective worship.

94. The principal has been in post for five years. She is continuing to ensure that the issues raised by the last inspection are being tackled effectively. Central to this has been her development of a successful team approach to the challenge, working closely with other members of the senior management team, middle managers and staff. She has the respect of staff and governors and the local education authority.
95. The principal has been effective in improving the quality of the governors' contribution to the management of the college. They now have a good understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses and take a full part in development planning. The chair has a high profile. His enthusiasm and energy are infectious and this helps to generate governors' commitment and motivation. A number of other governors also make a valuable and appreciated contribution.
96. Statutory requirements are not met in ICT and design and technology and in the college's not offering a daily act of collective worship.
97. The two vice-principals appropriately share responsibility with the principal for monitoring and evaluating subjects' work. They have also led the adoption and implementation of good procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and promoting good behaviour. These are two of the areas that have made the most contribution to the college's improvement.
98. Two senior teachers complete the senior management team. They perform operational rather than strategic tasks and a re-evaluation of senior management roles is needed to draw them into more long-term planning. The senior teacher responsible for the curriculum also has responsibility for geography, religious education and citizenship. Together with teaching most of the geography lessons, this range of tasks is too great to ensure that all are performed well.
99. The curriculum lacks a clear sense of direction; elements of curricular planning are undertaken by different members of staff. Senior managers need to create a clear development plan for the curriculum based on the learning needs of the pupils and meeting the demands of national and local initiatives such as the Key Stage 3 strategy.
100. The mission statement puts 'learning at the heart of all college activity'; the college works well towards fulfilling this aim. Measures to improve the effectiveness of teachers in helping pupils to learn are having an impact. The focus is mostly on elements of teaching practice such as the sharing of lesson objectives and improved procedures for managing pupils' behaviour. These have successfully created a better atmosphere for learning in classrooms. The next phase is for teachers and managers to look more closely at how well individual children are learning in response to the teaching.
101. Leadership and management are: very good in science; good in mathematics, ICT, modern foreign languages, history, art and physical education; and satisfactory in English, design and technology, geography, music and religious education.
102. The head of science is particularly effective. She works closely with the senior manager with responsibility for science to analyse how to improve the quality of the department's work and then successfully implements change in partnership with her colleagues. Significant managerial skills are a determination to achieve good results and very good communication and negotiation skills.

103. The development plan is a substantial improvement on the plan that was in place at the time of the last inspection; it has a long-term dimension as well as a short-term action plan. Five key aims form the strategic plan. They are appropriate, although some of the targets contained within them lack focus; for example, the target for all staff and governors 'to be able to explain the core purpose and priorities of the college'. The short-term plan provides a good level of detail about the action to be taken under the five strategic aims within the education year. Targets are set and cost and time-scale estimates provide benchmarks for measuring the success of its implementation. The college appropriately identifies the need to raise standards in English, particularly among boys. This does not figure highly enough in the development plan.
104. Over the past two years the college has been subject to a number of inspections from both Ofsted and the local education authority. While these have been stressful and time consuming for management and staff, they have helped to redirect the college's work.
105. The day-to-day organisation of the college is very effective. A relatively high number of staff provide good support to both managers and teachers and this makes the college run smoothly. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to manage the college; it is used well to help monitor pupils' progress.
106. The high school/upper school system adversely affects pupils' learning opportunities at Winstanley in a number of ways:
- matching teachers, resources and the accommodation to the demands of the curriculum is more problematic compared with most secondary schools because of the lower funding that pupils aged 11 to 14 attract compared with pupils aged 15 to 18; meanwhile, the need for specialist facilities is just as high. This has a direct impact on standards particularly, for example in ICT and design and technology;
 - a high proportion of managers' and teachers' time is spent co-ordinating curriculum and pastoral work with teachers in other colleges; this is inefficient;
 - recruitment of staff is more difficult because of the lack of GCSE or A level work.
107. No one has responsibility for the oversight and welfare of pupils with English as an additional language as a group or as individuals; this is unsatisfactory. The college identifies pupils whose first language is not English and informs teachers of the home language. It does not, however, measure or record their stage of English language fluency or monitor their progress.
108. The provision for pupils with SEN lacks cohesion and does not offer value for money. The quality of support given to statemented pupils is good in individual lessons but the college has little freedom to target the provision most effectively at pupils' learning needs. The SENCO is unable to build and develop a fully effective support team, since support assistants are on a monthly contract and support teachers on an annual, renewable contract. This disrupts the continuity of provision and restricts opportunities for staff to improve their effectiveness through in-service training. It also means that the good practice of linking support assistants to subjects cannot be established. The constant adjustment to allocated hours for statemented pupils destabilises the department and leads to the college looking to devise adjuncts to the provision, such as timetabling subject teachers for support. This is not a good use of an expensive resource because they are given the work in their non-contact time rather than when a specific need has been identified.
109. Staff, parents and pupils value the work of the SENCO; she is well supported by the senior management. The SENCO is a key member of the 'social inclusion steering group', which has oversight of all social inclusion issues including the support of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion.
110. The governor attached to the SEN department gives valuable service. He takes a close interest in its work, visiting frequently and reporting back to the governing body as a whole. Accommodation in the department has improved since the last inspection, although there is little space for the support staff to gather as a group, or to prepare their work and write reports. They use the SENCO's office, which puts considerable pressure on it during the day. Individual Education

Plans are being reviewed in the light of very good guidance from the local authority. Learning resources have improved since the last inspection, but computer and software provision is unsatisfactory. There is only one computer and an outdated word processor to support the basic skills development of SEN pupils. The SENCO has appropriate clerical support, but does not have a computer on which to record and process the requisite data and information, for intra-networking to departments. The authority has published very good guidelines, drawn from the revised Code of Practice.

111. The college has very good arrangements for financial administration. The bursar serves the college well, as recognised in the most recent audit report. This report made a number of recommendations, which have all been dealt with. These actions have been reported to governors. The bursar provides regular monitoring statements to governors, the leadership team and account holders. Governors have an active role in setting spending priorities and monitor the budget regularly. They have a satisfactory understanding of the processes, except of fixed costs. Their understanding of the link to college development planning is strong.
112. Although governors have not yet developed a policy to obtain best value for money, they have a good understanding of the principles and are implementing all except the guidance to compare the performance and costs of similar colleges. The weakness in this latter area means that the rationale for the breakdown of the budget is not clearly stated.
113. The college has restricted income because of its unusual pupil profile. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 attract less funding than older pupils. This disadvantages the college in comparison with a 11-16 or an 11-18 college, where a larger contribution to fixed costs will come from a more generous funding base. This is one of the reasons why some elements of the budget, such as the spending on building improvements and maintenance, are very high.
114. The targeted funding to support pupils with SEN is outside the college's control. The college also adds an equivalent amount from its own budget. This support, costing over 10 per cent of the total budget, is fragmented and unsatisfactory value for money.
115. The college is expected to have a deficit budget of £38,000 by the end of the current financial year, 2001/2002. At least part of this cost was in response to a staffing weakness, reported at the last inspection. There is a plan approved by the local educational authority to return to a balanced budget within three years.
116. Specific grants have been appropriately applied and accounted for. There are good monitoring procedures involving the bursar and the spending officers and there are appropriate evaluation processes in place to ensure that spending objectives are met.
117. In consideration of the standards achieved by pupils, relevant socio-economic factors and the level of funding available, the college provides satisfactory value for money.
118. The teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced to teach the National Curriculum in all subjects except for some staff teaching history and geography. A relatively high proportion of staff are sufficiently skilled in the use of ICT to use it as an effective learning tool. To date, not all staff have completed training in this area. The unsatisfactory staffing situation in humanities, reported at the last inspection, has been largely resolved. There is now much less reliance on temporary teachers, which has improved the overall quality of teaching.
119. The principal and governors have made a number of good teaching appointments over the past two years. This has had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching. Much work has been done to overcome the narrow range of work in the college and its effect on staffing. The principal has arranged secondments from a neighbouring 'upper' college to bring wider curriculum experience into the college.
120. There is a good range of support staff to support the delivery of the curriculum, except in modern foreign languages, where a foreign language assistant is needed to raise standards in speaking.

121. Staff development opportunities are good. They are linked directly to the college action plan and also respond to individual need as identified through performance management. The In-service Steering Group appropriately oversees provision of training and development. Staff training days all contain an element of in-service training and an opportunity to relate training to departmental needs. The new performance management arrangements have been developed well; these have been extended to all support staff. Arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers are good, as at the time of the last inspection. Arrangements for the induction of new but more experienced staff are now also good.
122. The accommodation is generally adequate overall, although much of it is in need of redecoration and refurbishment. There have been improvements to one of the science laboratories and new changing rooms for physical education are about to be built. The accommodation is poor for design and technology as there is no proper area for graphics and a shortage of areas to work in contrasting and resistant materials. In art, it is unsatisfactory, as there is very poor natural light to both rooms. Some health and safety concerns remain in the science, art and design and technology areas.
123. Despite a high level of expenditure on resources, departments have too few books and too little equipment to meet pupils' learning needs effectively. This is particularly an issue in design and technology, ICT, modern foreign languages, history and music. In design and technology, there are no facilities to work in metal, which results in a failure to meet the range of work required by the National Curriculum. Resources for ICT in departments are also unsatisfactory and result in a failure to meet the demands of the National Curriculum (even allowing for the provision of a new ICT facility). The number of computers in the college remains below the national average.
124. The library has been reduced in size since the last inspection but is more efficient and much more widely used by pupils. The after-college study club is growing in popularity. The extension of the hours of the librarian/resource technician means that pupils can be helped and supervised in the library throughout the day and for an extended period after college. The book stock is up-to-date and refreshed regularly by the use of the subscription service provided by the local education authority.

WHAT SHOULD THE COLLEGE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

125. In order to raise standards further the governors, principal and staff should:

- (1) Improve the achievement of the pupils, particularly of boys in English, by:
 - ensuring that the teaching of English is consistently good;
 - continuing to develop strategies to improve the quality of pupils' writing;
 - challenging pupils to think and to express ideas and arguments through discussion and written assignments;
 - offering more opportunities to use ICT in developing pupils' learning.
(paragraphs: 1-11, 16, 27-41, 126-134, 187)
- (2) Develop a more cohesive and cost-effective strategy of supporting pupils with SEN by targeting the high level of staffing resources more effectively and efficiently.
(paragraphs: 12-13, 39-40, 43, 56-61, 80, 108-110, 114, 155, 188)
- (3) Ensure that statutory curriculum requirements are met with regard to:
 - design and technology;
 - the use of ICT to support pupils' learning in all subjects.
(paragraphs: 18, 34, 43, 46, 93, 96, 133, 156, 161, 170-176, 180, 182, 183, 190-195, 204, 213, 219)
- (4) Improve curricular planning by:
 - establishing a set of principles from which all planning decisions can be derived;
 - ensuring that the arrangements to lead and manage the curriculum cover both strategic and operational tasks.
(paragraphs: 42-68, 99)
- (5) Improve the quantity and quality of books, equipment and computers, particularly for design and technology, ICT, modern foreign languages, history, music and religious education.
(paragraphs: 34, 106, 122-124, 133, 156, 159, 167, 174, 180, 193-194, 203, 229)
- (6) Improve the monitoring of subjects' performance by ensuring that managers concentrate on evaluating how well pupils learn in response to the teaching they receive.
(paragraphs: 27-41, 100)

In addition, the governors should:

- ensure that all health and safety issues are tackled;
- ensure that the English language skills of pupils with English as an additional language are known by all teachers.
(paragraphs: 14, 41, 73-74, 79-80, 107, 168, 176)

PART C: COLLEGE DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	111
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	67

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	17	44	45	4	0	0
Percentage	1	15	40	41	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the college's pupils

Pupils on the college's roll	Y7– Y9
Number of pupils on the college's roll	551
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free college meals	60

SEN	Y7– Y9
Number of pupils with statements of SEN	30
Number of pupils on the college's SEN register	120

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	42

Pupil mobility in the last college year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the college other than at the usual time of first admission	34
Pupils who left the college other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
College data	7.4
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
College data	1.5
National comparative data	1.1

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	84	82	166

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	40	56	59
	Girls	45	47	48
	Total	85	103	107
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	College	51 (51)	62 (58)	65 (48)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	College	22 (17)	29 (26)	29 (15)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	56	69	43
	Girls	50	53	39
	Total	106	122	82
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	College	64 (48)	73 (67)	49 (51)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	College	23 (16)	34 (29)	19 (17)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	37
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	478
Any other minority ethnic group	28

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y9

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	30.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.3

Education support staff: Y7– Y9

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	353

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y9

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.6
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Average teaching group size: Y7– Y9

Key Stage 3	25.2
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the college during the last two years	8.4
Number of teachers appointed to the college during the last two years	9.9

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last college year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	3	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	24	3
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	1395339
Total expenditure	1398991
Expenditure per pupil	2645
Balance brought forward from previous year	5852
Balance carried forward to next year	2200

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	551
Number of questionnaires returned	92

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes college.	44	53	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in college.	54	43	1	1	0
Behaviour in the college is good.	34	52	7	2	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	49	11	4	1
The teaching is good.	27	65	1	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	53	10	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions or a problem.	57	36	5	0	2
The college expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	38	1	0	4
The college works closely with parents.	32	50	7	1	11
The college is well led and managed.	27	53	9	1	10
The college is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	57	3	1	8
The college provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	55	4	0	9

All other comments from parents are contained within the main body of the report.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils are taught effectively and learn well in most English lessons.
- Schemes of work reflect recent changes to the National Curriculum and provide a good teaching framework for helping pupils to improve standards.
- Departmental policies and guidelines have been improved recently with the help of specialist advisers.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in English: they remain below the national average by the end of Year 9, particularly among boys.
- Teachers of English do not have a full understanding of how pupils learn English and practise language skills in Years 5 and 6. This hinders continuity of learning.
- Lessons do not give pupils enough practice in developing their skills, particularly in speaking.

126. Standards, as seen in lessons and pupils' work, are below average by the end of Year 9 in relation to national standards, particularly among boys. Good teaching and good course planning help pupils to make satisfactory progress in relation to their standards on entry to the college. Some pupils, particularly girls, make good progress and achieve well. Lower ability pupils and those with SEN also make satisfactory progress. Some who are given additional literacy support make good progress with reading and with writing. The pupils for whom English is an additional language are mostly fluent in spoken English and make progress at a similar rate to all other pupils. Teachers have little information about the language levels of these pupils.
127. The results in National Curriculum tests taken in Year 9 have improved in the last three years. The average points scored by pupils in 2001 are still below the national average and below the levels achieved in similar colleges but they show improvement compared with 1999 and 2000. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 6 and above increased in 2001 owing mainly to purposeful well-planned teaching. Girls have achieved more highly than boys in the tests in the last two years. Their performance has been nearer to the national average than has that of boys. In the 2001 tests, English results were similar to those achieved in mathematics but below those achieved in science.
128. Pupils' work seen during the inspection reflects the level of the test results. The reading and writing skills of pupils in the higher ability sets match national standards. The quality of the work in lower groups is below and sometimes well below national levels. The reading skills of pupils are higher overall than their writing and speaking skills, as they were at the time of the previous inspection; this is particularly noticeable among boys. In all groups pupils were confident in reading aloud and in reading to find information. Year 7 pupils interpreted well Wilde's story, 'The Selfish Giant', and were beginning to analyse the text competently and to select quotations to illustrate key points. All Year 9 groups showed similar confidence in their understanding of the motives of Macbeth and his wife. All pupils had a good recall of the scenes read and most were willing to read aloud extracts from the original text when asked to do this. The department supports reading well in Year 7 by giving introductory lessons in the use of the library and in encouraging pupils to borrow and read from a good range of fiction appropriate for the 11 – 14 age groups.
129. Pupils' unaided written work is generally weaker than their reading. The recently revised schemes of work, however, show clearly that the teaching of language is now given considerable importance. Good language teaching seen in Year 8 on newspapers gives pupils a clear understanding of the use of persuasive language. Most pupils can identify puns, alliteration,

metaphors and rhetorical questions in the construction of headline and short articles. Importantly, teachers give clear structures and models for pupils to develop so that pupils learn the skills of paragraphing and sequencing ideas as they learn to write. The practice, throughout the school, of writing final drafts of autobiographies, stories and response to literature to be collected into a 'best' folder is a good one. There is considerable difference, however, in the quality and quantity of finished writing in folders seen in different classrooms. A few pupils appear to have little finished writing, whereas some have a commendable range of interesting pieces written in different styles for different purposes. Teachers expect the finished work to be presented well and in most cases this is done. This is another indication of improvement from the last inspection. A good feature of the teaching of writing seen was the readiness of teachers to extend pupils who had finished work earlier than others. Good liaison was noted between support teachers and support assistants within English lessons. In the groups containing a high proportion of pupils with particular learning needs all adults understood their roles and most contributed effectively to the development of reading and writing skills; however, at times more support staff are present in classrooms than are necessary.

130. In all lessons seen, pupils were encouraged to listen carefully and to speak in response to questions. Few opportunities are given, however, for group work requiring pupils to think about and collaboratively discuss issues before sharing them with the full group or writing them up within a group project. The schemes of work indicate that some possibilities for discussion work are created, such as in the production of a newspaper. In most lessons seen, the teaching methods did not encourage group discussion. The weekly drama lesson provided in Year 7 is helpful in providing possibilities for movement and improvisation around themes developed in English. A successful lesson seen with Year 7 pupils gave opportunities for pupils to learn dramatic techniques, to work and discuss issues in groups and to perform, and to be part of an audience.
131. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. There is still some difference in the quality of individual lessons, however. This represents an improvement since the last inspection and it reflects the efforts made by the department to improve pupils' attainment levels. Although three quarters of the lessons seen were of a good standard and sometimes very good, some teaching did not reach that level for reasons of planning, the effective use of time, or the control of pupils. Only one lesson seen had unsatisfactory outcomes, with a small proportion of pupils doing little work and disturbing others. This was unusual, as in other lessons seen pupils' behaviour was generally good and reflected the high expectations of the teachers. Teachers in English lessons supported fully the college's assertive discipline policy.
132. The strength of the best teaching seen is in the very effective use of time to cover the maximum ground, as seen in a Year 8 lesson on creating a newspaper story. Other strong features include: good teamwork between class teacher and support teachers, well-produced teaching resources, good relationships between teachers and pupils, and providing intellectually challenging tasks to low-attaining sets. Improvements to teaching and learning could be made by teachers making themselves familiar with how pupils are taught in the primary schools, particularly through the Literacy Hour. This would give teachers a greater insight into how children are learning and practising language skills before they come to the college. Similarly, as the department makes increasing use of the National Literacy Strategy Framework it might benefit from developing a lesson structure which includes a short 'starter' activity to each lesson and which gives greater opportunity for group activities.
133. The work of the English department is effectively managed. Meetings take place regularly and all members of the department work closely to the schemes of work to meet the needs of the National Curriculum. Good use has been made of the opportunity to work closely with local education authority advisers to improve many aspects of teaching and learning. Important improvements have been made in the monitoring of teaching and the regular sampling of pupils' written work. This needs to be consolidated. All English teachers have attended some of the training programmes for the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy Framework and are aware of the main recommendations. The only unsatisfactory feature of the English curriculum is that the department does not have access to a computer suite to develop aspects of ICT within the schemes of work. This prevents the use of teachers' expertise. In the interim, good use is

made of the three library based computers and printers to allow pupils to word process finished work. Good use is made also of the library space by the department. Pupils take quiet research and writing activities into the adjacent library where there is helpful supervision all through the day.

134. An important step forward in the college's determination to improve attainment in English is the introduction of a fourth lesson in each week for the teaching of English. This now matches the national average time allocation for English in Years 7 to 9. Together with the whole-college developments as part of a literacy policy this should help to bring about improvements in pupils' language and literacy skills.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Strengths

- The teaching is good in all years.
- The department has a clear focus on the improvement of standards.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good.
- Teachers expect the pupils to work hard and behave well.

Areas for improvement

- To raise standards among higher ability pupils.

135. Standards, as seen in lessons and pupils' work, are average by the end of Year 9 in relation to national standards. The achievement of pupils in all years is good.
136. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 for both girls and boys were below the national average in 2001 but the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 5 or above was in line with the results of similar schools. There were also more pupils who attained this level than had attained Level 4 when they entered the college. This indicates that standards are rising. However, too few pupils attained the higher levels. The results were also below average compared with the results of similar schools (based upon the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals). The department is now focused on the raising of standards and plans are in place to ensure that all pupils are provided with greater challenge.
137. The work in the pupils' books is plentiful and well presented. It covers work on number, algebra, shape and data handling. It shows that the pupils are making good progress over time and that higher ability pupils are working at the higher levels.
138. The pupils work in sets according to their prior attainment levels. Pupils experiencing difficulties have the advantage of being taught in smaller sets and of being helped by conscientious learning support assistants, who record the pupils' progress against the targets in their good quality IEPs. In these groups there is an emphasis on the pupils' development of basic numeracy skills, with ample attention given to the other aspects of mathematics. These pupils were confidently plotting graphs, measuring angles and using calculators to convert fractions to decimals.
139. In the other sets the pupils worked at higher levels. They know the levels they have already attained and they have been set targets to encourage them to reach higher levels. One set of Year 7 pupils, when planning an investigation, were reminded of their targets and that to get the highest grading their results should include pie graphs or scatter graphs.
140. In number work, Year 7 pupils simplified linear expressions of varying complexity and Year 9 pupils used Pythagoras's theorem and quadratic equations to solve problems. In work on shape, Year 7 pupils understand the geometrical properties of two-dimensional shapes while Year 8 pupils can calculate the internal angles of polygons using a formula they had deduced and Year 9 pupils confidently manage areas of circles and volumes of prisms.

141. The pupils' progress in handling data and in the application of mathematics is good. They know how to prepare and present data tables. Year 7 pupils plotted coordinates for straight-line graphs and Year 8 pupils translated formulae to graphs and vice versa. A Year 9 set made good use of the college's new computer suite and prepared a database and calculated the average height of boys and girls in the class.
142. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In most lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good or better and none was less than satisfactory. The teachers have secure subject knowledge and a clear understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy. They have high expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour. They kindly empathise with pupils who have difficulties and are adept at ensuring their success, so encouraging them while challenging them to ensure progress. The teachers, being good humoured, kindly and hard working, are good role models. The pupils' behaviour in all lessons seen was impeccable. They arrive prepared to work and do so with enthusiasm.
143. Teachers structure their lessons well. They set clear learning objectives and refer to these during the course of and at the end of each lesson when they summarise the pupils' achievements. They reward the pupils during lessons for their efforts and their achievements and this helps to encourage the pupils and to maintain their enthusiasm. The lessons include a variety of activities and no time is wasted so that by the end of each lesson the pupils have produced a considerable amount of work and have made good progress.
144. The teachers provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and to work collaboratively. In one set they worked in groups to test a teacher's hypothesis that different types of books contain the same proportion of 3 or 4 letter words. In another set the pupils planned, conducted and presented the data of a survey of their own choice. With their teacher acting only as adviser, they displayed maturity and confidently demonstrated their mathematical skills.
145. Marking is up-to-date and includes positive comments of encouragement and advice on how pupils can improve further. Some work is marked with the National Curriculum levels that have been achieved, which helps remind pupils of their progress towards their targets. The teachers carefully assess, record and keep track of the pupils' achievements.
146. The mathematics department is well managed and there is good teamwork. The teachers monitor each other's work, they share ideas and all are determined to improve standards through target setting for themselves and for the pupils. They have received training, which is reflected in the common structuring of their lessons. The head of department has, with the support of his team, produced a departmental development plan that prioritises the raising of standards. He has set targets based on careful data analysis and the assessment of the monitoring of pupils' work and of classroom observation but no evaluation dates are set and no explanation of the evaluation processes is included.
147. New schemes of work have been produced based on the National Numeracy Strategy. These are useful long-term plans. However, medium-term planning should now be introduced to include resource referencing and suggestions for teaching methods to ensure that teachers include more opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively, to carry out investigations, and to make the best use of ICT including computers and audio-visual equipment.
148. Such medium-term plans would provide the vehicle to include advice for teachers on means of addressing the cross-curricular themes which the department has not yet considered. These include spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, citizenship and literacy.
149. The mathematics classrooms are bright and spacious but some areas need redecoration. In one classroom, displays of work are of a high standard and reflect a positive ethos and respect for the pupils. The department would do well to repeat this example in all rooms and corridors.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Good analyses are made of pupils' progress, which helps to guide planning.
- Standards are rising.
- The monitoring of the department's work is helping to improve its quality.
- Good use is made of ICT.

Weaknesses

- Policies need to be developed to guide future action, for example in literacy, numeracy, and provision for more able pupils.
- The quality and quantity of ICT equipment is unsatisfactory.

150. Standards, as seen in lessons and pupils' work, are average by the end of Year 9 in relation to national standards. The attainment of pupils entering the college is below that found nationally; this pattern has been followed for a number of years. In 1997 the National Curriculum test results were above the national average. They fell steadily to below the national average in 2000. The results in 2001 results showed a significant improvement on 2000 and were in line with the national average for pupils of all ability levels. The pupils entering the college in 1998 showed below average attainment; these same pupils had reached the national average in 2001, making the value added by the science department good. In 2001 the attainment of boys at age 14 was in line with that nationally while girls' attainment was below that of girls nationally. Pupils with English as a second language and gifted and talented pupils make good progress; those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 9, standards in science are above those of pupils in English and mathematics.
151. Pupils' learning in science is good. In Year 7 lower ability pupils are weak in spelling. More able pupils show increasing use of scientific units of measurement. Higher ability pupils can clearly explain the menstrual cycle and food chains and webs. Pupils' understanding of forces is more limited; in a Year 8 lesson, pupils were not clear about how to measure them. More able pupils can explain change of state and expansion and show above average understanding of gut structure and digestion. The department encourages the use of ICT and pupils are able to import text and images into documents. In one lesson, sensors had been used to log laboratory temperatures and a graph of the results had been plotted; pupils were able to explain the shape of the graph. Pupils in Year 9 human biology projects demonstrate skills of independent research and initiative, producing high quality scientific work, some pupils using well developed ICT skills (including a PowerPoint presentation saved to a CD-ROM). Lower ability pupils show a limited understanding of plant structure but can carry out investigatory science at a basic level. More able pupils show a satisfactory grasp of the spelling of scientific words and can explain the reactivity series of metals.
152. The department has given thought to the teaching and learning of investigatory skills. This has resulted in an improvement in pupils' skills of planning, observation, analysis and evaluation. Pupils' work shows clear progression in teaching and learning in this area from Year 7 to 9. Teaching materials to help in the construction and interpretation of graphs have been purchased and their use is evident in pupils' work.
153. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in science lessons is good. Pupils show interest; they cooperate and respond well to teachers' requests. They put great efforts into project work and are keen to show their work to teachers. These attitudes are a reflection of good teaching and a firm yet friendly classroom atmosphere.
154. Overall, the quality of teaching in science is good. In most science lessons the teaching seen was good or very good. Where teaching was good, the lessons were well planned and lesson

objectives were explained to pupils at the start. Teachers routinely make good use of question and answers to recap earlier work, probe pupils' understanding and prepare pupils mentally for the learning experiences to follow. Key words are identified and discussed, such as the terms 'elastic' and 'plastic' during a lesson on forces. Planned practical work is discussed with or explained to pupils so that they will be able to carry it out. All teachers show an awareness of the pace of learning and move lessons on briskly, making appropriate and effective use of lesson time. In lessons with higher ability pupils the work is challenging, as in a lesson on gut structure, where a progressive series of questions took pupils, without effort, to a level of understanding normally seen at GCSE level. Teachers were confident and able to turn pupils' incorrect answers into constructive learning experiences. The classroom management of pupils is good. ICT is used effectively, as in a lesson investigating forces on bicycle motion. Sufficient time is left at the end of lessons to consolidate learning and tidy away apparatus.

155. Some weaknesses were noted. In one lesson, the location of apparatus for practical work made it necessary for the whole class to move to one area of the room, leading to potential conflict and possible accidents. Practical work stopped short of interesting, more challenging aspects, as in work on springs where the elastic limit was not reached. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long and this results in pupils losing concentration. While some work was matched well to the ability levels of the pupils, there is greater opportunity to extend this provision for both more able pupils and those with SEN. Teaching assistants work hard to support pupils with SEN but they do not have a good enough understanding of the subject to be fully effective. Appropriate use is made of work-sheets and text books as teaching aids; pupils do not spend an inordinate amount of time working from either of these resources during laboratory time.
156. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Schemes of work are currently being rewritten, based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme. ICT is an integral part of the scheme and is being used well considering the limited equipment available in the department. Pupils are given the opportunity to e-mail homework to their teacher. Despite the new computer suite close by, there is a need for further laboratory-based hardware and software if science is to contribute fully to ICT demands of the science curriculum and the cross-curricular demands of the ICT curriculum. The science curriculum is enhanced by museum visits, a science based Egyptian day and the WISE bus.
157. The department has made significant progress in the assessment and monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress. Assessments are more accurate than previously, helped by materials from national sources. Pupils who are failing to make progress or are underperforming are identified and enter a mentoring scheme to help them. While marking is carried out regularly and targets are used, there is a need to tell pupils what it is they need to do to improve. Similarly, college reports should explain more clearly what pupils can and cannot do with reference to their learning in science. Teachers routinely talk to pupils about the standard of their work using National Curriculum levels.
158. The management of the science department is very good. An action plan has been put into place in response to the last inspection. Schemes of work are being updated and this is having a positive effect on standards. Through the strong leadership of the head of department, assessment and monitoring of pupils' attainment is well established. The work of the department is monitored by lesson observation, scrutiny of pupils' work, interviews with pupils and analysis of performance data. ICT training for staff has taken place and teachers have attended other in-service training. Areas for policy development and action have been identified and outline policies are in place. There is a need to give further attention to policies on literacy, numeracy, marking, spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and meeting the needs of more able pupils and those with SEN.
159. The new laboratory is a great improvement in accommodation but there is a need for new blinds in laboratories. Lack of effective blinds impedes the use of overhead projectors, televisions and computers as teaching aids and seriously constrains the opportunity for optical work in the curriculum. The floor in some laboratories and in the corridor outside constitutes a serious trip hazard. Efforts have been made to improve the laboratory environment by using interesting and

good quality wall and window displays but the quality of the furniture and decoration in some areas is still poor. Resources for teaching are satisfactory but laboratory based ICT equipment is inadequate and does not match the capability for use of ICT in the department.

160. Since the last inspection the department has shown good improvement. The demand of tasks set for pupils has improved. Pupils' attitudes to science have improved. The use of numeracy skills is evident and the department has obtained and is using materials to improve pupils' skills in graph work. There has been a reduction in reliance on work sheets. ICT is being well used by the department. The department is encouraging pupils to make good use of ICT. Unsatisfactory behaviour is rarely evident in the department. Teaching overall is now good rather than satisfactory. One laboratory that was in the worst condition has been refurbished. Pupils now have increased opportunities to write at length. The approach to investigatory science has been reviewed and is now much improved. Consideration has been given to challenging higher ability pupils.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **good**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and the very good subject skills and knowledge that teachers use to enhance learning.
- High expectations of behaviour and standards of work.
- Very good relationships across the department, creating a very positive learning environment.
- Artwork is celebrated well in classrooms and public area displays.
- The behaviour of pupils and their commitment to work are good.

Areas for improvement

- The use of computers and good software packages to enhance learning and the appropriate training of teachers to use it effectively.
- The use of sketchbooks, especially note taking and the annotation of work.
- Schemes of work need bringing together as the key section of a separate art department handbook.
- The accommodation, and health and safety requirements.

161. Standards, as seen in lessons and pupils' work, are average by the end of Year 9 in relation to national standards, with sound evidence of standards rising through Years 7 to 9, reaching to a level above national averages in some lessons in Years 8 and 9. This results from the good and often very good teaching in the department and the high standards expected of pupils. Pupils enjoy the creative and technical challenge of the work they are set and lessons are characteristically relaxed, but purposeful and well focused. The computer is being used to extend the keyboard skills and software knowledge of pupils, but with only one suitable computer and relatively simple art programs to use, the development of digital art is restricted at the present time. Extending the use of sketchbooks to record observations and explore visual and tactile ideas, as well as to develop the annotation skills of pupils, would further challenge and prepare pupils for the GCSE courses available at the next stage of their schooling.

162. Pupils achieve well at the college and by the end of Year 9 they are attaining levels in line with and sometimes above national averages for their age. Pupils arrive at the college with varied and generally limited experience of art in their primary schools and with a level of skills below national expectations for their age. They learn to use line, tone, colour and texture in their work and progress quickly with their drawing, painting and modelling skills. By the end of Year 7 attainment levels are often in line with national averages. Girls tend to progress more rapidly with their neat and careful approach to pattern making and design work, although the more able boys tend to be more creative and adventurous, experimenting with curvilinear op art patterns and using bold colours to strengthen images. Pupils learn to form and join thumb pots and are imaginative in forming them into 'potheads'. They are taught clay skills well and are pleased with the fired

results. Larger individual and group clay work is being planned, although the ceramics room is small and may well restrict the range of work undertaken and the storage and display of finished work. Pupils in Year 8 grasp the principles of one-point perspective well, learning the importance of the vertical lines in perspective drawings.

163. More able pupils work to a good standard of finish, embellishing the facades of buildings with lettering and architectural detail that display a firm grasp of perspective. They alter and work over their drawings as they strive to use their knowledge of perspective. Pupils identified on the special needs register find the freedom from literacy demands liberating and they make the same good progress as others in the lessons. Those who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties find it generally relaxing to work in the department and they behave well and make good progress with their work. Less able pupils experience difficulty in handling brushes and paint and tend to spoil their efforts by their lack of skill and patience. More able pupils are able to comment on the balance and dynamics of geometric shapes in designs that are inspired by the work of abstract painters such as Kandinsky. Year 9 pupils are confident in using crayon in their work, blending and toning their studies very effectively, sometimes using a restricted monochrome range. They demonstrate good control of the tools they use and the more able are very imaginative in their work, designing individual features for their graffiti 'tags' to make them unique and visually powerful. They do not use sketchbooks to record the development of their work. At this stage the evidence of research into the work of famous artists and the use of annotation to consolidate their knowledge of art and the processes they use in their own work is weak.
164. Pupils enjoy art and generally behave well. They are well motivated by the well-planned lessons and settle to work quickly. They are encouraged to think for themselves and to manage their work independently. This is most noticeable where lessons do not linger on the design and preparation stages. They are generally respectful to adults and pleased to talk about their work with visitors. The positive, relaxed environment for learning is well established by teachers and pupils work well within it.
165. The quality of teaching and learning is good and often very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subject and are skilled artists in their own right, teaching with confidence and clarity. They expect high standards of work and are appropriately firm in managing the lessons, enabling pupils to work generally without disruption. Specialist art terms are used well, although they are not effectively displayed in the classrooms to reinforce the knowledge and techniques used in each module. Good reference is made to artists who work, or have worked, in the styles being studied, but they are not consolidated through further research in the good reference books available or on the Internet. This latter is not helped by the college's lack of access to the Internet. Sketchbooks are not used frequently enough to help pupils record observations and explore ideas prior to producing final pieces of work.
166. Teachers plan well for lessons, using the generous lesson time to introduce, recap or consolidate the lesson brief. They generally allow for a 'gallery session' at the end of each lesson, although the development of pupils' critical observation and understanding of their own work or that of others is not yet effectively developed in those sessions, with teachers tending to impose their views, rather than teasing out the critical views of pupils. Good use is made of homework based on the lesson topic and completed homework is assessed and displayed very effectively in the art room. Teachers use the National Curriculum levels to assess work, but their isolation from accredited GCSE and advanced level courses makes this process difficult to moderate. Level descriptors are not easy to use in the assessment of artwork and there is a need for the teachers to build up a sound file of work examples at each level, which can guide the assessment process more accurately.
167. Teachers manage lessons very well in accommodation which offers very limited natural light, making observational studies of form difficult, and which affords no views of the natural world outside. The modular schemes of work are used effectively to build the pupils' knowledge and skills of art in a programmatic way. The lack of resources in areas such as printmaking and three-dimensional work narrows the range of creative skills that can be developed. The very good use of a professional stone-carving artist in residence, employed to direct the carving of a stone gateway

for the local park, has added much to the skills and knowledge base of the pupils he has worked with. The art department works well within the combined faculty of art and design technology, but needs to develop the creative areas of its curriculum in more clearly separate ways from those of the design and technology areas.

168. The head of art and design gives good leadership and enables the art department to develop in a positive direction. The two art teachers also offer good leadership in helping the pupils to achieve high standards. Pupils' work is celebrated in neat and imaginative displays around the classrooms, although more could be done to provide improved displays in public areas of the college. The accommodation is unsatisfactory, because of the cramped ceramics room and the lack of natural light available in both rooms. The long-term problem of clay dust being circulated by the heating system has been partly resolved, but there remains a health and safety problem from this circulating silica dust, which needs to be resolved effectively.
169. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The qualities of teaching and learning have improved and there has been a significant improvement in the assessment and recording of pupils' progress. However, computers do not play a significant part in artwork, sketchbooks have not been fully and effectively introduced and accommodation remains unsatisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Despite the limited resources available to the department the pupils achieve standards that are in line with national standards.
- Teachers are aware of National Curriculum requirements and prepare pupils well for end of Year 9 assessments.

Areas for improvement

- Increase the curriculum time for design and technology so that the National Curriculum can be covered satisfactorily.
- Increase the range of work in resistant materials so that pupils have further opportunities to work in contrasting materials.
- Provide ICT equipment that can be used by pupils to extend their opportunities when designing and making.
- Provide an area, other than a practical one, where graphical work of good quality can be produced by all pupils working in the department.

170. Standards, as seen in lessons and pupils' work, are average by the end of Year 9 in relation to national standards. The overall standard of work in designing projects is slightly higher than in making them. However, pupils do not always complete design folios satisfactorily and in consequence, it is sometimes difficult to judge their overall development and progress. Work completed in electronics is of a low standard.
171. Teachers' Assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 over the past two years indicate that the pupils achieve standards that are broadly average; they show a difference in attainment between boys and girls. Girls were significantly better than boys in 2000 by a margin of 27 per cent but this was reversed in 2001 when boys achieved four per cent better than girls. Pupils are well prepared for the assessments and this is the main reason why standards are average, given the weak curricular provision.
172. In the last inspection report of 2000, attainment was said to be similar to that seen during this inspection. The poor behaviour noted in 2000 was not seen this time and it is clear that there has been an improvement in this respect. It was not possible to observe any textiles being taught

during this inspection and it was not possible to form any judgement based on the quantity of completed work seen. Progress cannot therefore be measured from the situation in 2000, when attainment was judged to be unsatisfactory.

173. In all the lessons observed, teaching was at least satisfactory and in a very small number was good. No lessons were seen that were graded as unsatisfactory or worse. Teachers generally possess a sound knowledge of their subjects and this helps pupils to make satisfactory progress. Subject knowledge is less secure where staff are required to teach in areas that are not within their specialisms; for example, in food technology and some graphics lessons. In these cases, pupils do not have the benefit of the more intuitive insights that are brought with specialist teaching. Teachers give supporting comments to pupils in all lessons and this helps their learning but the expectancies of pupils could be increased in some instances. Teaching was better when tasks were suited to the pupils' levels of ability and appropriate learning resources were used. In the better lessons seen, teachers expected pupils to produce work of an appropriate level; they demonstrated skills and techniques with precision, demanded good behaviour from the pupils and created a positive learning ambience in the room.
174. There is a critical lack of the necessary resources to teach the subject comprehensively. The limited resources for physically manipulating resistant materials such as metals and timber mean that the curricular content has to be adapted to account for this shortfall. This is also true in the use of ICT and other equipment, where there is little coverage of systems and control. These deficiencies are critical in ensuring the enthusiasm of the pupils for the subject, being able to cover the National Curriculum properly and also offering those pupils the relevant skills so that they can achieve well at GCSE in the upper schools.
175. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory, overall. The department head is also head of art and this can bring confusion as to where one subject starts and the other finishes. Further re-affirmation of the intent of design and technology within the curriculum as well as identifying the cross-curricular skills and techniques in the two subject areas would help clarify these issues. Although the curriculum time is limited there has been a realistic attempt to cover the National Curriculum through the schemes of work. Some aspects such as knowledge and understanding of systems and control and structures receive a little curriculum time but not enough to ensure that they are covered in appropriate depth. These factors, allied to the critical lack of essential resources, give an overall curriculum offering that is impoverished.
176. Health and safety matters are catered for reasonably well apart from some minor electrical problems in the workshop area. Long hair also needs to be restrained suitably when pupils work on practical tasks, particularly in food technology.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching has improved.
- Standards are improving.
- Assessment procedures are good.

Areas for improvement

- Standards overall, but especially for boys and for higher ability pupils.
- Teaching methods, to provide greater opportunities for independent learning.
- The use of ICT to promote pupils' learning.

177. Standards, as seen in lessons and pupils' work, are below average by the end of Year 9 in relation to national standards. In general, pupils' attainment in geography is below average when they come to the college. At the time of the last report standards were well below average.

Results and inspection evidence indicate that there has been a rise in standards since that time and that standards are now below average rather than well below. Girls still do better than boys but the gap is narrower than at the time of the last inspection. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily. There are no wide differences in achievement between the different ethnic groups found in the college. Pupils with SEN and those with English as an additional language achieve appropriate standards in relation to their prior attainment and their achievement is satisfactory. Higher ability pupils do not always achieve the highest standards of which they are capable. The previous instability in staffing had an adverse affect on standards. Where a teacher who is not a geography specialist is teaching, standards are not rising so quickly. There have been significant changes to the curriculum, to teaching methods and to assessment procedures that have led to the rise in standards.

178. In 2001, the Teacher Assessments at the end of Year 9 indicated that standards were below average in relation to national standards. Results for girls were higher than those for boys.
179. By the end of Year 9, pupils have acquired a working geographical knowledge. Pupils in Year 8, for example, can describe the main physical features of Italy and can identify the main towns and cities, with some of their characteristics. Pupils have a satisfactory geographical vocabulary and pupils in Year 9 use such terms as *tropical* and *continental* when working on climate types. They are able to describe the location of climate belts and the main characteristics of the weather found within them. Pupils are able to carry out their own research and write up the results, such as those done by Year 9 pupils about tropical rainforests. However, these are isolated examples and higher ability pupils generally do not have regular, systematic opportunities to develop the skills of analysis, interpretation and exploration and this adversely affects their achievement. This is recognised by the college and changes in teaching methods are being made to accommodate these features.
180. Geography makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' development of literacy. Pupils' work is regularly marked and corrected and displays of vocabulary are in classrooms. The emphasis on basic vocabulary and on grammar and spelling has a positive impact on literacy standards. Pupils routinely draw and use graphs and tables to present and interpret data and the subject makes a good contribution to numeracy in the college. Pupils' use of ICT to edit and refine their work, for research and to create graphs is unsatisfactory. The college is aware of this and plans are in hand to improve the provision.
181. The quality of teaching and the learning it promotes are satisfactory overall. Good, or very good, teaching was observed in just under one-third of the lessons seen. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Teaching was reported as being unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection and there has clearly been a considerable improvement since that time. Good class control is a strong feature of the teaching and this is achieved with quiet authority and without fuss. As a result, pupils behave well in lessons and show good attitudes to work. Relationships in lessons are good and pupils work well together. This is also an improvement since the last inspection, when behaviour was often poor. Relevant homework is regularly set.
182. Good planning for lessons is a feature of the teaching with the result that teachers are always clear about what is to be done and this provides a consistent learning pattern for pupils. The objectives of lessons are shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson, providing them with opportunities to check their own learning at the end of the lesson. Where teaching is very good, the lessons are carefully planned to provide a range of challenging activities tailored to suit the range of abilities found in most classes and to provide extension work for pupils who finish quickly. Teachers provide interest for pupils by setting work that makes them think for themselves and examine evidence. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 8 lesson where pupils were studying areas of Italy. A group of higher ability pupils was sent to the library with instructions to carry out some individual research. Other pupils were provided with a range of tasks to complete that were at an appropriate level for their attainment. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good or very good, it is the lack of features such as pupils posing their own questions to answer, and carrying out investigation and interpretation that are not strongly evident. The use of field courses and case studies to provide pupils with independent learning opportunities is not

sufficiently well developed. These are the skills that higher ability pupils need most in order to raise standards further. The use of ICT to enhance and improve pupils' work and for research is unsatisfactory and the subject does not meet statutory requirements. Planning is in hand to overcome this deficiency.

183. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In lessons pupils are able to reflect on their environment and to appreciate the wonders of nature and of the world. This is clearly seen, for example, in work done on hurricanes in climate studies and in work on volcanoes and earthquakes. A moral dimension is found in lessons and pupils are taught right from wrong. Pupils are also taught to listen to others in discussions and to respect the views of other people. There are satisfactory opportunities for social development through working together in pairs and groups. The in-built cultural element about people from other countries provides satisfactory cultural development. The scheme of work has been extensively revised and now provides a progressive and appropriate course, which is beginning to raise standards. Good procedures are in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. These provide good data for setting targets for the subject and for individual pupils. Resources at the time of the last report were inadequate. These are now satisfactory overall, but the department still needs more ICT resources, video films, maps and materials such as aerial photographs. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Those issues raised at the last inspection have been, or are being, dealt with and there are clear priorities for improvement. The subject has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers' enthusiasm and hard work.
- Teachers' management of pupils.
- Assessment procedures and target-setting.

Areas for improvement

- Improve the quality of learning.
- Make greater use of resources.

184. Standards, as seen in lessons and pupils' work, are below average by the end of Year 9 in relation to national standards. Pupils enter the college with standards of attainment below the national average. By the end of Year 9 they have made satisfactory progress but are still below the national average. Teachers' Assessments at the end of Year 9 show a steady improvement over the last three years, with results in 2001 that were very slightly above the national average, boys performing markedly better than girls. Standards observed in lessons and in work done earlier in the year indicate that many of the ablest pupils are achieving above average standards.
185. By Year 9 the ablest pupils have made good progress since Year 7. They can detect, for example, the possibility of a cover-up in the Gunpowder Plot, and understand the connections between the Reformation and Henry VIII's search for an heir. There is imaginative but factually accurate writing to illustrate through letters and diaries why the Parliamentarians were disillusioned with Charles I, and some good exploration of child labour in Victorian mills and mines. However, the larger group of pupils of average ability seldom write at any length. They can answer closed questions on a worksheet, but cannot usually test historical source material for its reliability by asking who the author was or for what audience it was intended. They cannot argue about how and why interpretations of events may differ, nor see at all clearly why one event may have caused another. They can remember very little of what they have learned previously.
186. Standards of teaching are satisfactory and this leads to generally satisfactory learning. There were no unsatisfactory lessons, and some that were good. The strengths observed in the

teaching are many: teachers are highly conscientious; they know the subject well and put it over with confidence and enthusiasm; they spend many hours preparing materials for pupils of different levels of attainment; they have very good relations with pupils, who are accordingly well motivated; they mark thoroughly and set appropriate targets; and they maintain very attractive displays in the classrooms.

187. Despite all their hard work teachers pay too little attention to how pupils learn. There are few opportunities for discussion, either in the whole class or in small groups. As a result, pupils seldom express their own opinions or listen to those of others. Though time is given to research and pupils do use the library, resources are mostly limited to worksheets. While pupils compare sources, for instance about the execution of Charles I, they do not probe why the sources may differ, nor draw conclusions from the evidence. There is too little extended writing, so pupils cannot practise the art of using words fluently and expressively. Marking is thorough but the grades awarded are sometimes higher than the work warrants. Overall, the quality of learning is only just satisfactory.
188. Pupils with statements of SEN make good progress because of the support they receive. Pupils with SEN who do not have support make variable rates of progress. The use of SEN support staff is not planned well enough. In one Year 7 lesson, three pupils with SEN were withdrawn for additional support which was provided by a teacher and a support assistant; this was an inefficient use of staff because the session could have been run just as effectively by one of them. There are some pupils for whom English is an additional language but this is no handicap. Some such pupils are among the highest attainers.
189. The quality of improvement since the last inspection is good in many respects, but only satisfactory overall. A new head of department has been appointed and has done a great deal to address many of the issues raised at the last inspection. However, she has been in post too short a time to have any marked impact on the quality of learning. Standards have risen among the most able, and this was shown in much better Teacher Assessments in 2001. Pupils' motivation and behaviour are now very good. There is good planning for the future, schemes of work have been re-written, and procedures for assessment are in place. The foundations are therefore laid for further improvement. Key issues remaining are: attention to the skills of speaking and extended writing; a tighter reference to historical sources; greater accuracy in assessment; more frequent use of text-books and information and communication technology; and a wider deployment of learning support assistants.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching in the specialist lessons.
- The high quality management of the department.
- The use of ICT in science.

Areas for improvement

- Statutory requirements in most subjects other than the specialist subject are not met.
- There are too few computers to enable most subjects to offer an appropriate level of ICT provision.
- Many teachers do not have strong enough ICT skills to make good use of ICT in their teaching.
- Ensure that girls achieve as well as boys.

190. Standards, as seen in lessons and pupils' work, are average by the end of Year 9 in relation to national standards. Standards of attainment in ICT reported in the 2001 assessments at the end of Year 9 are in line with the national average. Work of a high standard was seen during the course of the inspection. There has been a progressive closing of the gap between the national results and those of the college in the past three years. There is insufficient coverage of work

involving control, measurement and recording events and in consequence pupils do not make sufficient progress in this aspect of ICT by the end of Year 9.

191. In the last inspection report of 2000, standards were reported to be in line with national expectations except in control technology where it was below. It was also noted that ICT was not being used well enough across the curriculum. The situation remains unchanged in both respects. The previous report noted that there was no significant gender difference in attainment. This was surprising, as the test results and information supplied by the college does not support this. In 2001 there was an 18 per cent difference in the attainment of boys as compared with girls, the boys getting the better results. This remains an issue for the college to solve. All efforts to identify reasons for the gender differences in attainment are being explored by the head of ICT; the reasons are, however, unclear from the evidence gathered during the inspection.
192. The quality of the teaching and learning in ICT in the core lessons is good; it ranges from satisfactory to very good. The knowledge, planning and delivery of lessons by these staff can be very good. In these lessons, successful techniques capture the imagination of pupils. For example, in two Year 8 groups the use of the white boards helped increase the pace of learning greatly when considering the use of spreadsheets for making invoices. This enabled the teachers to cover a lot of ground in the lessons, which ensured that pupils made good progress. In the best lessons, teachers give a clear exposition of what is required, they are well prepared, maintain a good lesson pace and possess good knowledge of appropriate applications.
193. A different picture exists in other subjects and curricular areas of the college, where ICT equipment is not generally used as a teaching aid. This is due to a lack of resources and the lack of understanding of a significant proportion of the teaching staff about how to use ICT to promote pupils' learning. The great exception to this is in science, where much good use is made of ICT equipment and techniques within lessons.
194. The college has been struggling to improve the computer to pupil ratio since the last inspection. A section of the library has been converted to make a second ICT room housing a new network of computers. This new facility is due to be operative from early February and is a welcome addition to the college. This development is in response to one of the key issues of the last inspection report. The number of computers within the college still remains low when compared to the national average. It is the issue of the lack of computers around the departments of the college enabling a complete curricular coverage that inhibits greater progress in the subject and gives rise to the unsatisfactory state of overall subject provision.
195. The management of ICT is led by an enthusiastic teacher suitably supported by a technician, who keep the systems running effectively. Much of the recent development has been completed 'in-house' and this has enabled the college to get the systems it requires at good value for money. The work of the ICT Steering Group, actively supported by the head of ICT, will help motivate the development of the subject across the curriculum.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers' planning.
- Writing standards by more able pupils.
- Improvement since the last inspection and the capacity to improve further.

Areas for improvement

- Unsatisfactory standards in speaking.
- Too few books and equipment.
- Information and communication technology not delivered through the curriculum.

196. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection in the attainment of all pupils and specifically the most able. The behaviour of the pupils has improved. Teaching style and inadequate resourcing lead to low standards in speaking.
197. Standards, as seen in lessons and pupils' work, are average by the end of Year 9 in relation to national standards. Teachers' assessments also indicate that standards are broadly in line with national averages and have shown a trend of improvement over the last three years. The percentage of pupils attaining National Curriculum Levels 4, 5 and 6 has increased significantly. The number of pupils attaining Level 6 has increased from none to almost one in five. There has been considerable improvement since the last inspection.
198. As at the last inspection, pupils have good skills in listening and reading and they understand French well. They are too inclined to show this understanding in English and do not respond well in French. More able pupils produce a good standard of extended writing, often by varying and adapting text in French. Other pupils write in a satisfactory but less extended style. Standards in speaking are low: pupils have insufficient opportunity to speak for genuine communication and much speaking is only reading aloud of written material, without fluency or good accent.
199. The low standards in speaking are a reflection of the teaching style. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, a third of lessons seen being good or better. Lessons are planned well but the style is not helping pupils attain speaking standards in line with other skills. Teachers use French in their teaching but they use English too often, particularly when pictures or actions would explain meanings just as well. Pupils copy this example and reply instinctively in English when they should be using French. There are too few opportunities made available for work in pairs and groups. When such opportunities are made, pupils speak too much in English instead of practising their French. In a Year 7 lesson, the teacher had to stop a paired activity because pupils were not following instructions to work in French. Teaching of listening, reading and writing is more effective. Teachers use their own good command of the language, and recorded native speakers, in listening exercises.
200. Teaching of pupils with SEN enables these pupils to make satisfactory progress. There are often learning support assistants in the classroom; in one Year 8 lesson, the contribution of the support assistant was very valuable in helping pupils to learn. In two Year 7 lessons, where there was no support, the teachers gave all pupils good opportunities to learn by asking appropriate questions and providing writing materials suitable for individual abilities.
201. Pupils' learning is satisfactory in almost all lessons, which is an improved position on the last inspection. They acquire new knowledge and use words and phrases they learned in previous lessons. They do not yet appreciate the use of French for genuine communication with the teacher and other pupils. Girls and boys make equal progress, as do pupils from minority ethnic cultures.
202. Pupils' behaviour is usually at least satisfactory as a result of the considerable effort made by teachers. The poor behaviour reported at the last inspection no longer has the effect of preventing pupils from learning. Pupils' attitudes to French are less good. Many lack the confidence to use the language as a means of communication.
203. Accommodation is good in quality. The lack of suitable equipment available to the teacher who works outside the main language area is adversely affecting the quality of teaching and learning. Learning resources are unsatisfactory. Sharing two overhead projectors between three rooms is also limiting teachers' opportunities to vary their methods in lessons. There are not enough textbooks for pupils to take them home to do homework. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced and staffing is adequate to deliver the curriculum. Speaking standards could be improved by the appointment of a foreign language assistant, to serve as a role model to the pupils.

204. The breadth and balance of the curriculum are unsatisfactory. Unlike in most secondary schools, pupils do not have the opportunity to learn a second modern foreign language during Years 7, 8 and 9. ICT is not used as part of the modern foreign languages curriculum, nor is it used to enhance pupils' learning. Some pupils work on display was word-processed and pupils are set homework tasks to use the Internet.
205. Assessment procedures in listening, reading and writing are good. Assessment of speaking is less effective and should be improved to match the level in the other three skills. Marking of pupils' work does not indicate what pupils need to do to improve, although there is evidence of recent use of National Curriculum levels.
206. The leadership of the department is good and has been responsible for improvement since the last inspection. Teachers work well as a team and staff represent the department on whole-college working groups. Monitoring of teaching and learning is appropriately informing departmental and college planning. The department does not have a policy outlining teaching methodology; this is needed to tackle the weakness in speaking.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- The status of the subject is improving.
- Instrumental teaching is well managed.
- Extra-curricular groups are developing.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are not high enough.
- Curriculum planning does not fully cover the National Curriculum nor provide for a progressive development of pupils' skills.
- The availability of resources, particularly ICT resources.
- Improve the accuracy of assessment and its use to guide curriculum planning.

207. The previous inspection took place at a time immediately following the death of the music teacher after a period of illness. Pupils' learning in the subject was disrupted during and after this time. In the term following the inspection it proved impossible to find a music teacher and the subject was temporarily taken off the timetable. The effect of these events was severe and is still evident in the below average standards achieved by pupils in Year 9.
208. The teacher in charge of music was appointed in September 2000 as a newly qualified teacher. Given the events of the preceding year the prospect facing this teacher was a daunting one, but one from which, after just over four terms, she has emerged with considerable credit.
209. Standards, as seen in lessons and pupils' work, are below average by the end of Year 9 in relation to national standards. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 are well below those expected. More needs to be done to standardise assessment in levels and there is a need for caution in interpreting these results. Nevertheless, they give a broad indication of the standards at that time. Given the low level of pupils' musical skills on entering the college this represents satisfactory achievement. Music making, knowledge, understanding and skills are at an elementary level, and pupils' knowledge of composers and styles is minimal. A small but growing number of pupils enhance their musical attainment with additional instrumental lessons and there are further opportunities to do so in the band and choir.
210. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and is having a positive impact on pupils' learning which is sound. The teacher has established a positive working atmosphere in lessons and this enables a range of musical activities to take place. However, in the lessons observed there was insufficient practical activity to give pupils opportunities to use their musical knowledge, for example in

applying their understanding of notation. To a certain extent this was due to the timing of the inspection, which occurred at the start of new modules of work, but a better balance of theoretical and practical activities in all lessons would motivate the pupils more effectively and enable them to improve the rate at which they develop musical skills. Difficulties with playing keyboards would improve if pupils were given more encouragement to use appropriate fingering. The teacher has good knowledge and understanding and makes good use of time and available resources; however, the quantity of resources, particularly ICT resources, is not sufficient to support pupils' learning adequately. The teachers' planning of lessons is good, but the overall scheme of work requires further refinement to cover all the requirements of the National Curriculum. The scheme of work also does not clearly identify how pupils will progressively develop their listening, performing and composing skills throughout Years 7 to 9. The degree of challenge in some of the work in Year 9 is similar to that set for pupils in Year 7.

211. Ongoing oral feedback about pupils' progress is given in lessons and careful records are kept of marks. However, pupils' knowledge of their own learning is vague and more needs to be done to inform the pupils about how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Most pupils' attitudes and behaviour are positive, especially in Years 7 and 8. Despite some shortcomings they make reasonable progress. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress. More able pupils are not identified as such but there is a presumption that instrumental pupils have progressed further than their peers and such pupils are given more challenging tasks, at which they make good progress. Pupils from ethnic minorities make satisfactory progress.
212. The instrumental teaching programme is well managed and choir and band are developing. There was a good Christmas Concert, much appreciated by the community.
213. At the time of the last report unsatisfactory standards in music were part of a key issue. A number of the weaknesses identified then still remain; for example, standards are not as high as they should be and ICT is not used to enhance pupils' learning. However, staffing difficulties have been resolved and there is now a full-time teacher in post. Extra-curricular groups have been established and esteem for the subject is growing. There has therefore been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, although much remains to be done.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The leadership and management of the head of department.
- The varied extra-curricular programme.
- The department's contribution to pupils' moral and social development.

Areas for improvement

- Developing schemes of work which focus on maximising the learning of all pupils, particularly the most able.
- Improving the contribution of the subject to the teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT.

214. Standards, as seen in lessons and pupils' work, are average in relation to national standards. Standards are lower in Year 9 than in Years 7 and 8 because the strategies introduced by the relatively new teaching team have not had as much impact on those pupils. Standards reflect satisfactory teaching to which the pupils respond well and through which they learn appropriately. The achievement of pupils in the current Year 9 is unsatisfactory. Strategies to raise standards, introduced by staff new to the college since the last inspection, have meant that the achievement of pupils during Years 7 and 8 is satisfactory.
215. The difference in attainment of boys and girls is now consistent with what is found nationally. From work seen in lessons pupils can perform basic techniques in racket sports and swimming.

Pupils in Year 8 show good understanding of body position and hand/eye co-ordination in serving and performing the overhead clear in badminton but lose consistency when working under pressure of space or opposition. In Year 7 swimming most pupils can swim at least 25 metres and have good basic techniques in performing a rescue from the poolside. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of physical education vocabulary are weak and restrict attainment in oral and practical work. Pupils now make satisfactory and some good progress through Years 7 and 8. Progress through Year 9 is still unsatisfactory for many pupils. Higher-attaining pupils are restricted by tasks set which are not demanding enough.

216. Most pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Instances of pupils' attitudes and behaviour being unsatisfactory are mainly in Year 9, where concentration levels are low and a lack of developed literacy skills excludes some pupils from tasks and activities. Teachers now follow clear guidelines and so such disruption is effectively managed. Most pupils enjoy physical education and have a responsible attitude and approach to their learning. Participation levels are good and non-participants are always included in the learning process. Many pupils are able to work effectively as individuals but also co-operate well when working in pairs and small groups. Pupils usually develop good relationships with other pupils and the teacher. Most are able to take responsibility within extra-curricular activities.
217. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. In one lesson teaching was very good. The strengths of the teaching include good planning based on a secure knowledge of the subject, good organisational skills, positive interaction with pupils and a commitment to pupils' moral and social development. This means that pupils are able to learn basic techniques through appropriate activities and in an environment that encourages learning. Although procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are now in place, greater use needs to be made of assessment in order to ensure that teachers and pupils have a clear understanding of the progress being made. Teachers are clear about intended outcomes and share them with pupils at the beginning of lessons. Teachers identify appropriate tasks so that pupils of different ability are making progress. Greater attention needs to be paid to pupils' standards of literacy in planning lesson activities.
218. The new teaching team has had most impact on raising standards in Years 7 and 8. Pupils develop competence in basic badminton, basketball and swimming techniques. Their development of knowledge and understanding is enhanced by their ability to work co-operatively in pairs and small groups when developing basic techniques through Years 7 and 8. However, activities do not always allow pupils to develop their observation and assessment skills so that they could be clear about what they could do and were capable of. Progress was similar in all groups of pupils. The progress of higher-achieving pupils is restricted by teachers' lack of consistency in the setting of challenging tasks and inadequate attention to their observation and assessment skills.
219. Leadership and management in physical education are good. The head of department has a clear vision for the future development of the subject, with a sharp focus on raising standards. More planned opportunities for pupils to assess their own performance against success criteria and improved teaching of numeracy and literacy skills and the use of ICT are needed to raise standards more quickly. Teachers need to ensure that these planned opportunities are now having a positive effect on standards in Year 9. Reports need to clearly convey to parents how pupils can make progress. The department has a strong philosophy of care for its students and a focus on the social and moral development of the students. The department is well organised and the department handbook provides guidance on schemes of work, lesson planning and safety matters. The department does not have risk assessment data for all physical education activities and facilities. Both indoor and outdoor facilities are good. Changing room provision will improve with the planned upgrade due in February 2002. There are good resources, with good systems for maintenance and storage. The physical education curriculum meets statutory requirements. The department recognises the importance of extra-curricular activities that enhance learning. Some non-specialist teachers help with clubs and teams. Take-up by pupils is good, with some progressing to local and area teams and competitions. The department has made good progress in improving teaching and learning, pupils' attitudes and behaviour and standards achieved by all

groups of pupils. The time allocation for physical education is now consistent with national averages.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Higher attainers produce some work of impressive quality.
- The monitoring of lessons is having a positive impact on the overall quality of teaching.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good.
- The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- All pupils are well integrated in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures are poor.
- Satisfactory teaching needs to be brought up to the quality of the best.
- Some pupils, of all ability levels, are not given sufficiently challenging work.
- Schemes of work are not well balanced and do not build pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills progressively.
- Resources are inadequate.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use ICT to support their learning.

220. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are below average overall in relation to the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. A minority of pupils reach above average and average standards but the inspection evidence, from lesson observations and the analysis of a representative sample of pupils' work, indicates that the standards reached by the majority are below average.

221. The achievement of most pupils is satisfactory in comparison with their starting points in Year 7, although some pupils could be stretched further and do better. This applies to a minority of pupils from all levels of attainment. Some work of these pupils is incomplete and, particularly in the case of higher attainers, of insufficient length to fully demonstrate the extent of their knowledge and understanding or develop their skills and ideas. Some higher attainers in Year 9 produced work of impressive length and quality when writing about biblical origins of the Christian ideal of justice. They were able to provide detailed explanations of the teaching found in the parable of the Vineyard or in Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus. In some cases these were ably presented in the style of a newspaper report created by using computers. This was backed up by some well-written accounts of the work of prominent campaigners such as Martin Luther King and Gandhi.

222. Pupils generally have a better knowledge and understanding of some of the key features of belief and worship in Christianity and other world faiths that they study than of the impact that belief has on the lives of members of faith communities. Year 8 pupils' work showed a sound knowledge of what Muslim pilgrims to Mecca do and see, but did not explain why such journeys are important for believers. Year 7 pupils are well prepared for future learning, in an effective introductory unit of work. They explained possible reasons for having a religious faith and there was some thoughtful reflection on some of the "big" questions which face humanity such as the possibility of life after death. Some pupils of otherwise average ability provided very perceptive and thoughtful responses. Pupils in general responded well to this task. Many are reaching standards in this aspect of their work that are average for their age. Many pupils in Years 7 to 9 still have weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Oral contributions to lessons are better and teachers tend to place more emphasis on these aspects of pupils' use of language in lessons than on the quality of written work.

223. Progress from Year 7 to 9 is broadly satisfactory, with higher attainers in particular developing their skills in this subject. However, there is some inconsistency between different groups of

pupils and the current curriculum plan results in some unevenness. For example, in studying a theme such as pilgrimage, there is an undue emphasis on one of the faiths studied at the expense of others. Consequently, pupils are unable to make comparisons between the faiths.

224. No significant difference is evident in the quality of boys' and girls' work. Pupils with SEN make generally satisfactory progress. Pupils with written Statements of Special Educational Needs tend to do better because they are well provided for with learning support and liaison between subject teachers and the support teachers is effective. Other pupils who have SEN rely on adapted learning materials and individual attention from their teachers and make similar progress to other pupils in the class. Teachers carefully ensure that pupils from different faith backgrounds are well integrated into lessons and can contribute through their own knowledge and understanding of some of the faiths studied. Effective liaison with parents ensures that some pupils who might otherwise be withdrawn from lessons because of their beliefs are able to take a full part in learning. Many learning experiences contribute well to pupils' spiritual and moral development.
225. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Their interest is reflected in the questions which they ask during lessons and in general they concentrate well and apply themselves to their learning activities. Many pupils show a good sense of engagement with their tasks and some use computers on their own initiative to research information and present their knowledge and ideas in a variety of ways, for example in the form of newspaper articles or graphs. Behaviour is generally good and, together with attitudes to learning, has improved since the previous inspection, largely as a consequence of improved teaching and the effective use of the college's assertive discipline procedures. Pupils work productively with each other when discussing their work, though few opportunities to do so were seen during the inspection.
226. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and has improved since the previous inspection, when some was judged to be unsatisfactory. However, the proportion of good teaching is still not as high as that found in most schools. Subject knowledge of specialist teachers is good and used well in lessons to add colour and stimulate interest. Fewer lessons are now taught by non-specialists than at the time of the previous inspection. Subject knowledge of non-specialist teachers, some of whom have substantial experience of teaching religious education, is adequate to teach to the level demanded, although more guidance is needed to ensure that all the skills and attitudes required by the Agreed Syllabus are adequately covered.
227. Teachers are alert to the needs of individual pupils. In a lesson in Year 8, a pupil who lacked confidence wanted to answer a question put by the teacher to the class in general but was very hesitant. The teacher sensitively encouraged her and her eventual response made a good contribution to the overall learning. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and in most lessons a concluding discussion or questioning by the teacher allows pupils to assess the progress they have made and consolidate their new knowledge and understanding. Weaknesses observed during the inspection in otherwise satisfactory lessons tended to result from inexperience and featured different aspects of lessons. Some lessons, which start at a brisk pace and involve pupils well with interesting and challenging activities, run out of steam so that learning, though ultimately satisfactory, could have been better. In a lesson that investigated the crucifixion, the planning omitted some of the potential learning opportunities. Good teaching used pupils' own experiences and previous learning as a starting point, made sure all were suitably stretched and monitored progress carefully throughout.
228. The scrutinies of pupils' work indicate that there is some inconsistency in coverage of the units of work between teachers and that some pupils could have been stretched more. Marking is regular. Teachers' comments are supportive and encouraging but do not help pupils to see how well they are doing in relation to expected standards. This is because the department does not yet have effective procedures to enable teachers to match pupils' achievements against the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. This weakness was also identified at the time of the previous inspection.
229. Subject management is satisfactory, although hindered by a lack of specialist subject experience and constrained to some extent by the substantial whole-college and other subject responsibilities held by the hard working, experienced head of department. Improvement since the

previous inspection has been satisfactory; most of the issues raised at the time have been resolved. In particular, the monitoring of teaching through a planned programme of lesson observation is raising the quality of the provision. The quality of the curriculum is improving, although more still needs to be done to ensure good progression. Some issues do still remain outstanding. The time made available for the subject is still less than that recommended, although is similar to that provided by most schools. Assessment procedures remain unsatisfactory. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to experience visits to places of worship or listen to visitors from different faith backgrounds. In addition, the range of religious objects available to support pupils' learning about different faith communities is too limited, the department lacks the means to enhance learning by using audio-visual resources, and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use computers to help their learning.